

A
RATIONAL E
Of the Literal DOCTRINE of
ORIGINAL SIN;

OR A
VINDICATION of God's permitting
the Fall of ADAM,
And the Subsequent CORRUPTION of our
HUMAN NATURE.

Leading to a brief View and Defence of the Grand
SCHEME of REDEMPTION,
Placed in a NEW LIGHT;

And built on a *Rational* Exposition of
the Principal PARABLES,
And many other *important* Passages of *Scripture*,
that have been hitherto much misunderstood.

Occasioned, at first, by some of Dr. *Middleton's* Writings.

Her Foundations are upon the Holy Hills. Pf. lxxxvii. 1.

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DEDICATION.

To my Two SONS,
RICHARD BATE,
A Merchant in the *East Indies*;

A N D

JAMES BATE,
A Stationer in *Birchin-Lane*.

My dear Sons,

I Address these few Sheets to you two, partly as a *just* Acknowledgement of your *good* and *dutiful* Behaviour, in all Respects; but, principally, that I may give the World, the strongest Test I can, of the Sincerity of my own Heart, in the Cause I am here embarked in. For as I can say with *St. Peter*, that *Silver and Gold I have none*; it would be hard, indeed, if I did not also add, *with him*, — that, *such as I have, give I unto you*. But, I thank God, I have no great Reason to complain of my Lot, since it has pleased *him*, in the Course of *his* good Providence, to give the Elder of you, not only the *Abilities*, but, — what is much more to be valued, he has also given him the *Grace and Goodness* —
of

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of Heart, to enable the Younger of you, by a generous Free-Gift, to gain an honest Livelihood, in a Business that bears, at least, *some* Relation to the Profession of a Scholar. Such are my Reasons for departing from the usual Aims and Views of Dedicators, to present these Pages to *you two*.

And now, that “God may bless you
 “ both with such a Share of his *temporal*
 “ Blessings,—and *such a Share only*, as may
 “ best promote your *Spiritual* Advantage,
 “ —and give you the Sense and Courage
 “ to bear up boldly against the Current of
 “ a thoughtless, loose, and wicked Age,”
 —has long been my fervent Prayer. And I trust, that if I die in my Senses, the same Petition will be put up to the Throne of Grace, by the latest Breath, of

My dear Sons,

Your truly affectionate Father,

*St. Paul's, Deptford,
 August 29, 1766.*

James Bate.

adviseable enough for the Reader, to weigh and examine it with the greater Care; but as to myself, I think I see sufficient Reason, no longer to call this Tract An Essay TOWARDS a Rationale; but an absolute Rationale of the Dispensation; and such an one, I trust, as will stand a public Scrutiny: Notwithstanding all those Triumphant Boastings of Infidelity, that for so many Centuries past, have deterred most Christian Advocates from standing up in Defence of this Article; making them cry out with that doubty Hero, in Prov. xxii. 13.—There is a Lion without! I shall be slain in the Streets! And I hope it will at least add some small Credit to Divine Revelation, in case this great Bugbear should prove to be defeated, at last, by one of the meanest and obscurest of all those who ever yet presumed to handle a Pen, in Defence of the Christian Cause.*

Indeed,

* I must ingenuously confess, however, that if I had not received much previous Help, from some eminent *English* Writers of this eighteenth Century, who have greatly reformed and improved our Metaphysics; particularly Dr. Law, the present Master of *Peter-House*; I might still have kept in as close Quarters, for fear of the Lion, as any body else.

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Indeed, this Point was always so favourite a Topic with me, that in the earlier Days of my Life, I both heartily wished, and earnestly prayed, that, if it were God's Will, I might live to see this great Stumbling Block set aside; at least, so far removed from me, as no longer to leave any kind of Doubt upon my own Mind. And so far, I thank God, I have happily succeeded. For as it was my hard Fate, in my younger Years, to serve one of our Ambassadors abroad, as his Chaplain at a Foreign Court; I there fell into a Controversy with a Friend, about the Divine Authority of the Christian Faith; which we carried on, in Writing, privately, between ourselves only. And then it was that this Difficulty puzzled me, to that Degree, that I resolved to make this Article, my chief Point of Inquiry, even, if need should be, to the very End of my Days. And therefore I determined, whatever Branches of Knowledge, I might afterwards turn my Studies to, yet, always to have this main Point in View; and both in Reading and Thinking, to make all other Inquiries subservient to this. But if this Inquiry should but give Satisfaction, to three or four such Readers as I aim

at ; I shall no longer repine at that unfortunate Expedition of mine (how ruinous soever it was, to my private Fortunes) since it proved the Occasion of my so closely and minutely examining into this most Beautiful Dispensation, the Fall of Man.

*Soon after my Return to England, I found more Reason than ever, to adhere to my former Resolution of sifting this Point to the Bottom. For, in the Year 1731, Dr. Waterland published his Scripture Vindicated ; in Answer to a Book called Christianity as old as the Creation. Against the former Treatise Dr. Middleton, in the same Year, wrote a Letter of Remarks to Dr. Waterland ; and in that Letter, p. 16, 17. he threw out this Goliath-like Challenge, equally addressed to every Christian Divine. “ Every Man has
“ a Right to require, from those who pretend
“ to be Guides and Teachers of Religion, how
“ such Passages [meaning the History of the
“ Fall] delivered and inculcated by them, as
“ the undoubted Word of God, can be recon-
“ ciled to the known Attributes and Perfec-
“ tions of the Deity?” Young as I was, I looked upon this Challenge, as an open Defi-
ance*

ance of the Armies of the living God :
*And 'twas with Regret that I saw it taken so
 patiently as it was. For though Dr. Mid-
 dleton's Insolence did, indeed, draw forth
 some Anonymous Replies ; yet, they all fairly
 left him in Possession of his main Point ; which
 was, — that " the literal History of the Fall,
 " was absurd and irrational." And accord-
 ingly, we find him vamping and boasting not
 a little, — that his Antagonists " disputed on-
 " ly about Words, and squabbled about the
 " grammatical Construction of separate Scraps
 " and Quotations ; but pretended not to meddle
 " at all with his Reasonings." Which was
 but too true ; for they did, indeed, drop the
 main Point ; and only shewed, that Dr.
 Middleton had misconstrued some Passages in
 Tully. But, how does it concern that Im-
 portant Article, the very Corner-Stone of all
 Revelation, whether Tully were rightly trans-
 lated or no ; or whether what Tully wrote
 were worth disputing about, at all ? The
 Question was not, whether Dr. Middleton
 could construe Tully ;* but whether the Fall*

of

* Old Dr. Bentley I remember, gave Middleton
 (long before he turned Deist) the Nick-Name of
 Cabbage-Head. Bentley was seldom out in his Cri-
 ticisms.

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of Man were an Absurdity or no? This gave me Fresh Resolution, never to quit Sight of this Subject, 'till I had at least satisfied my Own Mind upon it.

If, therefore, I should be told, that the Controversy is now grown old, and out of Date, as well as out of Fashion; I would answer, that as Fire latent under the Cinders, may soon rekindle again; so, since this Point was left absolutely unsettled at that Time, — nobody can tell how soon the same Dispute may come into Fashion, and grow young again. Therefore, though an Answer to an Objection, left unsettled by others, may, indeed, come late, yet — it can never come too late.

After what has been said, of the Occasion of my entering upon this Subject, I shall
make

ticisms. Here he seemed Prophetic. For take any of Middleton's Deistical Writings, and you may peel them, Leaf after Leaf, just like a Cabbage, 'till you come to nothing at all. It has been said, that Dr. Middleton's Pen might have been of great Service to the Cause of Christianity: But, I'll venture to say, that Christianity would have been of much greater Use to his Pen.

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make no Apology for the Boldness of the Attempt. For rather than stand by, and see the Groundwork of the Christian Oeconomy, thus abandoned, as it were, to the common Enemy; and hoping that the Strength of a good Cause, would, in some Measure, compensate for the Weakness of the Defender, I determined to offer my own poor Thoughts upon the Matter. If they give Satisfaction, 'tis well; and though they give none, yet, they may serve to stir up abler Apologists, to correct my Faults, and supply my Defects.

And thus, by Degrees, my Speculations upon this Point, first produced a single Sermon, preached — to my own Congregation! That Sermon grew into an Eighteen-penny Pamphlet; and in Process of Time, that Pamphlet grew bigger and bigger, 'till it swelled up to the Size of this Volume. For being determined to examine well, into the Merits of all Sorts of Objections; and being insensibly drawn on to follow the Scent, — this led me into a Discussion of the principal Parables. And from thence, you'll see, the Transition was easy and natural, to a brief

View and Defence of the General Scheme of Redemption. *So that, upon the Whole, the Reader here sees a Rationale of the great Outlines of the Christian Oeconomy; upon such a Plan, as may give some Satisfaction, I hope; especially as it comprehends also, clear Solutions of the other principal Difficulties, that have hitherto been objected to the Reasonableness of Divine Revelation.*

And here, indeed, I mean in the three last Chapters, — I found myself under a Necessity of fighting my Way through some absurd, though long-established Interpretations of Scripture. But established how? Why, wholly by Mens lazily and gently gliding down the common Stream of Interpretation and Comment; without having the Courage to face about, and oppose themselves, to the strong Torrents of Nonsense, in those Places where common Sense loudly calls out upon them so to do. All this is the Genuine Consequence*

* I have been obliged, in my last Chapter, to differ from two modern Writers, of prime Rank and Merit; and who, of course, are far from coming under this Description. But, though the Cause of Truth, will sometimes oblige a Man to differ from those,

quence of too humbly submitting to the inglorious Task of always drawing in the slavish Trammels of System; rather than to expatiate at large, in the wide and noble Field, of Christian Revelation, explained by the Rules and Measures of common Reason. And I'll venture to say, that had this Rule been followed as it ought, the Reformation of the Church from Popery, had dated itself some Centuries before the Birth of honest Martin Luther.

*And now, if the Reader should ask, according to Custom, — “Whether or no I have
“any thing new to offer?” I answer him
frankly,*

those, whose Talents and Abilities are infinitely superior to *his own*; yet, — I judge it a kind of a Misfortune, when such Necessity happens. For it subjects a Man to the ill-natured *Censure*, or at least *Suspicion* of being ambitious to weigh himself, in the Scale of Merit, against his *Betters*. But due Justice can never be done to TRUTH, nor the common Stock of Knowledge be properly improved; if even the *meanest* Writer, don't resolutely break through this Piece of false Modesty: And join with Bishop Lowth, in this most *Just* and *Spirited* Resolution. *My favourite Principle*, says his Lordship, *is the Liberty of Prophecyng, and I will maintain it with my last Breath.* Letter to the Right Reverend Author, &c. p. 133. 1765.

*frankly, — “ I have hardly any thing else.” But don’t let him therefore think, that I am ambitious of removing Foundations, only for his Diversion or Amusement: For, indeed, I have no such kind of Views. My whole End and Aim is, to evince, that the Old Foundations are exceeding sound and good, even where they have been too often thought to be most defective. Nor am I at all fond of starting Paradoxes. So far from it, that I have been chiefly attentive to shew, that many Things that have been hitherto taken for strange Paradoxes, are yet so far from being any Paradoxes at all, that they are plain honest Truths; equally consonant both to Scripture and Common Sense, as well as naturally tending to illustrate and enforce true Protestant Christianity in general, and the Principles of that Church in particular, of which, after the most diligent, free, candid, and unprejudiced Inquiry made, I glory in the Honour and Happiness of being a Member.** For

* Time was, when I stood astonished at the Coolness so eminently visible in the Bulk of the Professors of the Church of *England*; while other Sects are so remarkably zealous in *their* Way. But the Knot is soon untied. The Doctrine, Worship, and Discipline

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*For I utterly disclaim all Extraneous or Domestic Heresy, Whimsy, or Blunder whatever ; be it either Socinianism,—Arianism,
— Semi-*

Discipline of the Church of *England*, are *Rational, Manly, and truly Christian*. 'Tis divested, on one Hand, of the *external* Grandeur, Pomp, and Tinsel of *Popery* ; and all other low and despicable Contrivances, to catch the Eye, — to please the Fancy, — and to curry Favour with the Affections, Passions, and Corruptions of the Vulgar. On t'other Hand, it stands clear of the mean Arts of some others ; who would have little to recommend them, if they did not turn up the Whites of their Eyes, bawl out Nonsense with a Puritanical Snivel, and pretend to a more than ordinary Share of *Sanctity*. And this is another sly Way to steal into the Hearts of those who take all for Gold that glitters. So that the Church of *England*, that despises these low Tricks, and keeps up a Golden Mean in every Thing, can lay hold on the Affections of those only, who can understand its Excellencies ; — who can compare it with *other* Sects ; — and who can dive into those secret Recesses of the Human Heart, into which *true* Religion is intended to penetrate. But these must be (*chiefly*) such as excel in Learning and strong Sense ; Things that lie too deep for the Penetration of every Eye ; and Things too, that are always attempted, by a Sett of subtil Knaves, to be preached quite out of Doors. And no Wonder ; for when once a *Mob-driver* has taught his Followers to look upon sound Learning, true Sense, Reason, and Reasoning, only as so many *Carnal Qualifications* ;

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Semi-Arianism,—Methodism,—or Hutchinsonianism. *And 'tis with Pleasure that I lay hold on this public Opportunity, of wiping off the Aspersions of my being a Friend to the latter: An Aspersions easily accounted for, by those who know me. No. I see no Reason to disgrace so glorious a Cause as that of Christianity, by embarking it on board a Bottom, that can never bear the Seas. The Weak, the Ignorant, and the Malicious (who are usually a pretty numerous Band) — would then, doubtless, be apt enough to think, or at least to say, — that Christianity has no real Foundation*
at

fications; because St. Paul, forsooth, discarded Science falsely (mind that, falsely) so called; — the Man's Business is then done at once. The Gudgeons are, then, all safe in the Net. This flatters the Pride of the Mob, by exalting their Ignorance up to the Clouds; and depressing as low, those noble Endowments of Learning and good Sense, that can be the only real Supporters of Truth. Hence it is, that the Church of England, though in Reality the Glory of the whole Earth, so little moves the Zeal either of the Great Vulgar or the Small: Of those, I mean, who send their Sons to Geneva, or Those who send them to Whitfield's Tabernacle. For it little concerns the Cause of Truth, whether a Wrong Head be covered by a Coronet; or by an old greasy Night-Cap.

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at all, were they to see it placed upon a Basis unable to support it. And sure I am, that Mr. Hutchinson's Scheme, however honestly and well meant it may be (for the Doctrines he endeavours finally to establish, by the Means of his Hypothesis, are certainly Sound and Orthodox) it has yet no solid Foundation, either in true Hebrew Criticism, — in the real System of the Universe, — or in the wise and admirable Laws of Nature. Those, I mean, that have been so happily and sagaciously discovered, and so clearly DEMONSTRATED, by that Glory of Great-Britain, or rather of the whole Human Race, the Incomparable Sir ISAAC NEWTON.

HINTS



HINTS to the Public.

*WHEN a single Person undertakes a Comment upon the whole Scripture, much Good may doubtless be done, by Collecting, Abbreviating, and Referring to Authors, who have enlarged well upon particular Parts. But such a Work seems to be too great an Undertaking for any single Person to perform compleatly, however sagacious, learned, or experienced he may be supposed to be. This appears sufficiently, from many of the best Comments we now have; and which still, were of Use formerly, as well as now — for want of better; but better are now most grievously wanted, indeed. Therefore, if the Public will candidly overlook the Meanness of the Proposer, and only attend a little to the Merits of the Proposals themselves, — perhaps the three following Hints, if put in Practice, might be of no small Use to the Christian Cause: As tending, in due Time, to produce as compleat a Comment, upon the whole Canon
of*

of Scripture, as the Nature of that Divine Book can possibly admit of. For the Scriptures seem to be a Source of Knowledge, as inexhaustible in their Nature, as the Wisdom, Knowledge and Power of him who inspired them. I would advise, then,

First, That when a young Divine begins to be actuated by a Love of Scripture Knowledge, and an Eagerness to pursue it; which even a small Share of Skill in it, will easily inspire him with; I say, it were to be wished, that he would always pitch upon some one Branch of the sacred Science and make that his PRINCIPAL AIM, in all his future Studies: Directing them all, chiefly to the Adorning and Embellishing of that particular Province. Making that I say, his Principal Aim; but not his only one, by any Means. For the Scriptures are so miscellaneous a Book, that they are necessarily connected with UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE; even with every Branch of Nature, Art and Science: And 'tis, indeed, by Means of this Connection with Science, that the Profession of Christianity so naturally tends to civilize the Barbarism
of

of Mankind; even in some Points, which seem, at first Sight, to bear little or no Relation to Matters of Religion. Hence I would recommend

Secondly, An excellent Piece of Advice, given in a little Tract (the Title of which, and the following short Quotation, I have luckily preserved, though not the Book) called Steph. Penton Apparatus ad Theologiam Generalis; Lond. 1688. Multoties evenit (says he) ut Philosophicum vel Philologicum Librum legenti, Occurrat Scripturæ locus eleganter citatus, et non ineruditè explicatus, fortean acutè. Periculum est, ne legenti Librum alio proposito, excidat ista Interpretatio, nisi Libri Chartacei usu, tempestivè caveatur. cap. 6, p. 13. I have often found Penton's Observation remarkably true; amongst other Things, — in that useful and delightful Amusement, the reading of Voyages and Travels. I followed this Advice, in my Youth, for some Years; with so much Profit, that I would now give, more than I care to say, that I had pursued it to this Hour. Therefore,

Thirdly

*Thirdly and lastly. When we reflect upon the immense Advantages and Improvements in Natural Knowledge, from the Observations and Publications made by the Royal Society; Quære, if some Society of like sort, might not be of use towards the Improvement of Scripture Knowledge? A Society of Persons, I mean, properly qualified to Receive,—Examine,—Censure,—Reject,—Record,—or Publish (in small Tracts, from Time to Time, like the Philosophical Transactions) such Observations, relating to the true Sense of particular Texts,—to the Improvement of the English Version, * or &c. &c. as might otherwise be all forgotten: But, being transmitted to such a Society, by Men of Learning, either with or without the Authors Names) they might, by such Means,*
b be

* But, surely, no such new Version can, in Point of common Sense, be attempted, 'till Dr. Kennicott's most Noble Undertaking shall be compleated. And what has the World NOT to expect, from the Integrity, Sagacity, Learning, and Industry, of that Gentleman; whose Writings (since his engaging in the Collation of all the Ancient Hebrew Manuscripts of the Bible) have shewn him so much superior, in all Respects, to EVERY ONE of those, who have endeavoured to discourage one of the most useful Projects,

be reserved in Store, against the Publication of a new Translation, and a new Sett of short Notes and Comments; both of which are now very much wanted.

I forbear to mention a fourth Hint; because, the Nature of it is such, that it can no way come, with any thing of a good Grace, from a Person in the Author's Situation. It can only be whispered in the Ear. You may see the Postscript however.

jects, that was ever set on Foot, since the Days of Inspiration. For if the Scriptures are God's noblest Gift to Mankind, surely, — a fair and well attested COPY of those Scriptures; to which all *Christendom* may appeal, as to the common *Standard* of Heavenly Truth; must be a Blessing proportionably great. While the POPE himself, and the most zealous *Roman Catholic* Princes, lend a chearful Hand to this Work, shall *Protestants*, and Protestant DIVINES too, throw cold Water on it!

POST-

P O S T S C R I P T.

THE Moment I had finished a fair Copy of these Sheets for the Press, comprehending the *Preface* and the *Hints* too; and after *much* of the Work was actually printed off; a Friend sent me a Book, to which I was, 'till that Moment, but by what unaccountable Accident, I know not,—an utter Stranger; though it had been published ELEVEN Years before. 'Tis called *The Dispersion of the Men at Babel considered, &c.* by JOSEPH CHARLES, Vicar of *Wighton* in *Norfolk*. London, 1755, by *Whiston* and *White* in *Fleet-street*. I must confess, that I think it one of the best Books I ever read; for this plain Reason, — because I am fond of Scripture Knowledge. And this Book gives *me* the clearest Insight into the most abstruse and difficult Parts of *both* the Testaments; but more especially the *Old*, of any *one* Book I ever yet perused. 'Tis such a Key to Scripture Knowledge, as may, in the Stile of some modern Publications, be called “Every Man his own Commentator.” It came so late to my Hands, and to my Knowledge too, that I could only squeeze in, here and there, a short Note, in one or two of those many Places, where this valuable Writer falls in with my own Sentiments, in my three last Chapters; as well as in my *Preface* and *Hints*: And in which, for the future, I shall be the more sanguin; as I find myself seconded by so able a Judge. But I have altered little or nothing of my Text, on his Account; though it might, perhaps, have been better for my Readers, if I had taken Time to do so: But, being in a very precarious State of Health, I was unwilling to stop the Press.

I am, *as yet*, an utter Stranger to the Person of this Gentleman; nor have I ever had the least Correspondence with him; but find, upon Enquiry, that he is pretty far advanced in Life; that his Vicarage of *Wighton* is worth near EIGHTY Pounds a Year! But how much must be deducted out of that Sum, for the usual Defalcations of *Cesses, Taxes, Repairs*, and *Tithe-stealing*,—I don't certainly know. However, I am told that this famous Vicarage of *Wighton* stands in a good Air: Of which also (as he lives hard by the Sea) I presume he must have great Plenty; especially when the Wind is at *North* and *North-East*. A lucky Circumstance, this latter, for a worthy Man, whose Preferment, in these comfortable Times of *Forestalling* and *Regrating*, can supply him with little more than *fresh Air*, and *his own Lucubrations*, to subsist on. This Gentleman's Obscurity, may naturally remind the Reader of that wise and judicious old Pope, who, when they shewed him the Works of some *other* eminent *English* Writer (*Chillingworth*, I think) and finding, upon Inquiry, that the Author was preferred in the Church, much about as well as Mr. *Charles* is *now*: The old Man shut up the Book, both with great *Composure*, and with this *shrewd Remark*, “ Little has the
 “ Church of *Rome* to fear from the Church of
 “ *England*, while the Church of *England* gives such
 “ Encouragement to such Writers.

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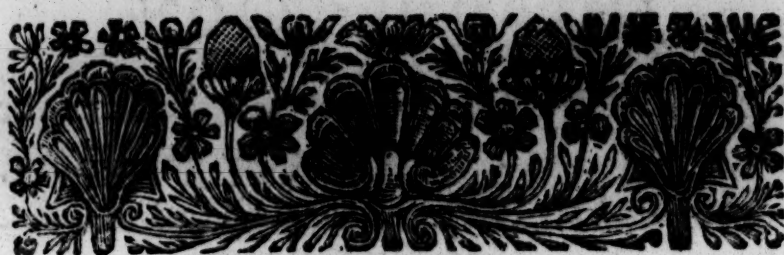
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A
RATIONAL
Of the Literal Doctrine of
ORIGINAL SIN:
OR A
VINDICATION of, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

Concerning the Occasion, Design and Plan.



IS but too well known, how great Offence the Doctrine of *Original Sin* has always given both to the Friends and Enemies of Christianity. Unbelievers have in all Ages triumpht in the unanswerable Objection, and defied the Advocates of Christianity, to reconcile the *Fall of Man*

§ I.
This Doctrine Cause
of much Offence.

B

to

INTRODUCTION.

to the Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, or Mercy of God. Even many good Men, Men in other Respects very sound and orthodox, have advanced things upon this Subject, unable to stand the Test either of *Reason* or *Scripture*, or to give any rational Satisfaction to the Mind of a candid Inquirer. But as to Heretics, both ancient and modern, numberless are the Absurdities and Contradictions they have run themselves into, to get rid of this Difficulty: Some allegorizing and explaining it away to little or nothing; others wholly denying it. But yet it must be frankly confessed, that the Doctrine of the Fall of *Adam*, and the subsequent Corruption of our human Nature, is certainly, together with all its Difficulties and Objections, a Part of the undoubted Word of God. There it stands, sure enough. Next to the History of the Creation, it is the *first* and most glaring Object that strikes the Eye, at our Entrance into the Bible. It stands there, recorded as a plain literal Truth, — as an historical Fact, — a Fact as literally true, as any other Fact recorded in *Genesis*.

Indeed

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Indeed I must add this Caution ; that when I call the *Mosaic* Account of the Fall, a *literal Truth*, I do at the same Time, together with the main Body of the Church, in all Ages, take it for granted, that what *Moses* calls *the Serpent*, was, in reality, one of the Brute Animals commonly so called ; but with this Addition, that its bodily Organs were actuated, for the Time, by that wicked Spirit, whom the Scriptures elsewhere call *the old Serpent, the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole World*. Rev. xii. 9. For surely, we can never think that the same Holy Ghost, which was *to lead us into all Truth*, would wilfully lead us into an Error of such Consequence, as he must have done, in styling the Devil — *the old Serpent which deceiveth the whole World*, except the Devil had been the same *old Serpent* that deceived our first Parents. For my Part, I cannot see with what Propriety of Speech the Devil can be said *to deceive the WHOLE World*, if he had not been the Deceiver of *Adam* and *Eve*, who were so *very* material a Part of that World, that *their* Deception was intro-

§ 2.
Yet a literal
Truth.

The Serpent,
who.

INTRODUCTION.

ductory to all the Deceits and Frauds that have been carried on in the World ever since. But to proceed.

§ 3.
Dr. Middleton's Objection.

As these Sheets were first occasioned by some of the late Dr. *Middleton's* Writings, I shall therefore make a few Abstracts from *him*, containing *his* Objections to this Doctrine. And I chose to pitch upon Objections of *his* drawing up, because I believe it will easily be allowed me, that few Writers have appeared lately, who have been either more *able* or more *willing* to do Justice to any Objection against Christianity, than that Gentleman. Now, then, for the Abstracts I spoke of.

§ 4.
When published.

In a Pamphlet, *then* Anonymous, but since publicly owned by Dr. *Middleton*, intitled, *A Letter to Dr. Waterland, containing some Remarks on his Vindication of Scripture: In Answer to a Book, intitled, Christianity as old as the Creation. Together with the Sketch or Plan of another Answer to the said Book, London, 1731.* In this Pamphlet, — after some few trivial

INTRODUCTION.

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vial Cavils about the Possibility of a Serpent's speaking, he goes on thus, p. 16.

Though the Introduction of a Devil may serve to clear up the Difficulty of the Serpent's speaking and reasoning, yet it raises up a new one of a higher Nature; which your Author charges upon it, against the Justice of God himself, in not interposing in so unequal a Conflict. This Objection, — is certainly of weight enough to puzzle and stagger our Reason; and every Man has a Right to require from those who pretend to be Guides and Teachers of Religion, how such Passages delivered and inculcated by them, as the undoubted Word of God, can be reconciled to the known Attributes and Perfections of the Deity.

§ 5.
His 1st Ob-
jection.

Should a Father discard and disinherit a Child for having deserted some Post assigned him; seduced either by the Craft of some old Sophister, or driven off by the superior Strength of some able bodied Man, the Father all the While looking on, nor interposing at all in a Trial so unreasonable; would not the Fact be thought barbarous and unnatural?

§ 6.
Enforced

B 3

Now

INTRODUCTION.

Now the Conflict in such a Case would not be more unequal than between our first Parents and Satan; and the Love of God to his Creatures, must necessarily be allowed superior to that of natural Fathers to their Children. Yet, you, Sir, see no Kind of Difficulty, and treat the Demand of a Reason on the Occasion, as a vain Curiosity, and impertinent Cavilling: Since every body you say, must needs see how kind and indulgent God was in this whole Proceeding: Whereas, to speak for myself, I cannot, from the literal Acceptation of the Story, with all your Comment upon it, see the least Symptom of any Kindness or Indulgence at all; but on the Contrary, a Necessity of flying to Allegory, to account for the seeming Injustice and unreasonable Severity of the divine Conduct. [But what bad Shelter the Allegory affords him, we shall see presently.] He goes on.

§ 7.
— From Cicero, but to small Purpose.

But since in a Question of this Nature, both your Reason and mine may possibly be suspected, as if prejudiced by Education, influenced by Custom, or biaſſed perhaps by some Interest, in favour of established Opinions;

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Opinions ; *I shall appeal to an Authority, which cannot be charged either with Prejudice or Partiality, with favouring or detracting from the Credit of Moses ; one of the greatest Masters of Reason that Antiquity ever produced. I mean Cicero ; whose Sentiments declared in some Cases, nearly allied to the present, may serve to inform us, what unprejudiced Reason would determine upon the literal History of Man's Fall.* [But what a Pack of solemn specious Impertinence are we here entertained with ? No Doubt, but that as *Cicero* was circumstanced, — an untaught Heathen, — of Course an utter Stranger to the Scheme of Revelation, totally ignorant of it, both in Whole and in Part ; — no Doubt, I say, but that had this Passage in *Genesis*, been culled out of the *Bible*, and singly laid before him for *his* Opinion upon it, he would have thought upon it much as his Biographer Dr. *Middleton* has done since. But, I trust, that had that honest and sagacious Heathen changed Circumstances with our Objector, — had *Cicero's* Birth been postponed to this eighteenth Century, — had he been born in *England*, and educated at

B 4

Cambridge ;

Cambridge ; more especially if, like his Biographer, he had had in his Custody, all the ancient and modern Learning in the Universe, I'll warrant him, he'd have made another Use of these Advantages than this Gentleman did ; he'd have blush'd to have reason'd like *him*. For, — to conclude, what would have been the Opinion of *Cicero*, WELL INFORMED, from what he may have written on a similar Case, while he was NOT INFORMED AT ALL of the Circumstances of the grand Point in Debate, [which Information this Man calls—*Prejudice*] what is this, in Effect, but to maintain, that the Cause had better be decided by such a *Jury* as never was *prejudiced* by hearing the *Merits* of that Cause at all. [But now he goes on.]

§ 8.
Second Quo-
tation from
Cicero.

Cicero tells us, that the very Gods of the Poets, had they known how pernicious their Gifts would prove to their Children, must be thought to have been wanting in Point of Kindness towards them. *What then would he have thought of God's foreseeing the immediate Fall of Man,*

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Man, yet creating him to a State of Sin and Misery?

He says in another Place, that 'tis unworthy of God to do any thing in vain, for that would be a Reflection upon Man's Constancy. What then could he have judged of the Formation of a Paradise, and all that Apparatus and Provision for the Bliss and Immortality of the first Pair; which was no sooner made than forfeited, and like a theatrical Scene, changed in an Instant, to a Prospect of Misery and Barrenness?

§ 9.
A third.

Again, it is, says he, the common Opinion of all Philosophers, of what Sect soever, that the Deity can neither be angry, nor hurt any body. How would he have been surprized then, to find God represented here as fierce and enraged, driving out his own Creatures in Anger, from the Bliss he had provided for them, and in a Kind of Fury, cursing the very Earth for their Sakes?

§ 10.
A fourth.

He

INTRODUCTION.

§ 11.

A fifth.

He exclaims on another Occasion, Oh the wonderful Equity of the Gods! Would any People endure the Maker of such a Law, that the Son or Grandson should be punished, because the Father or Grandfather had offended? How would he have exclaimed then at God's punishing so severely, not only the first Pair, but their whole Posterity, the whole Race of Mankind, for their Sin; and even the Serpent too, for the Fraud of the Devil?

§ 12.

A sixth.

Lastly, Upon mentioning a Dream of Alexander the Great, &c. How would he (Cicero) have laughed at your literal Story, of a Serpent actually speaking and reasoning, without moving the least Wonder and Surprise in the Hearer? These Passages may serve, I say, to shew what unprejudiced Reason would have thought of the vulgar History of Man's Fall: And though you, Sir, can swallow and digest the Whole, without the least Difficulty or Reluctance; yet, what Offence, what Contradiction to Reason, is to be found in every single Article of the Account.

'Tis

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II

'Tis necessary then, for the Satisfaction of our Reason, and the quieting our Scruples, to desert the outward Letter, and search for the hidden, allegorical Sense of the Story : Where I shall not take the Trouble of collecting all the Fancies and whimsical Solutions of the Rabbins and the Fathers, but content myself with proposing one, which appears to me the most probable and rational of them all, viz. That by Adam we are to understand Reason, or the Mind of Man; by Eve, the Flesh or outward Senses; by the Serpent, Lust or Pleasure : In which Allegory we see clearly explained, the true Causes of Man's Fall and Degeneracy; that as soon as his Mind, through the Weakness and Treachery of his Senses, became captivated and seduced by the Allurements of Lust and Pleasure, he was driven by God out of Paradise; that is, lost and forfeited the Happiness and Prosperity which he had enjoyed in his Innocence. All this is intelligible and rational, agreeable not only to the common Notions and Tradition of History, but to the constant and established Method of God's Providence, who has wisely constituted Misery, Sorrow, and the Debasement

§ 13.

He recurs to Allegory.

INTRODUCTION.

ment of our Nature, *to be the natural and necessary Effect of Vice and Sin.*

§ 14.
He repeats
the same Al-
legory.

So far Dr. *Middleton*, in this Pamphlet, first publish'd in the Year 1731. And I chose to quote him thus at large, that the Readers and Admirers of this Gentleman may see that I deal fairly by him. The Substance of these Objections was (at the Distance of nineteen Years after their first Publication) all repeated again in his *Examination of the Bishop of London's* (Dr. *Sherlock's*) *Discourses upon Prophecy*, London, 1750. And it recurs there so frequently, that 'tis needless to trouble the Reader with a Repetition of it. There also we meet with the old *Allegory*, particularly in P. 113 and 137, dressed up exactly as before; and almost in the same Words. One might have thought, that after taking full nineteen Years Time, to have considered better of the Matter, a Man of his fine natural Talents, for certainly such were *his*, might have produced something more to his Purpose, and better worth a serious Confutation.

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futation. But since he did not, 'tis proper we should here speak a short Word to it.

The good Doctor calls this allegorical Account of the *Fall* — Rational and Intelligible. But, I must confess, that I, for my own Part, am here stuck fast in as great a Difficulty as ever; even in such a *Slough of Despair*, that I fear no *Allegorizer* of the Fall of *Adam*, will ever be able to help me out of it. For here, God's *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, and *Justice*, stand all of them arraigned, tried and condemned, at the Bar of Dr. *Middleton's* REASON, for suffering our first Parents to be seduced by *an old Sophister of superior Cunning, without interposing in their Behalf*. But then, here lies the Mischief, — was it not equally cruel and unjust, to form him originally of such an infirm Constitution, that *his own Senses and Appetites* should so easily seduce him into Sin and Misery? Did not God *know* the Strength of those Passions and Appetites, *before* he was thus seduced? Why then did he not interpose? Why did he not arm him at first

§ 15.
— With but
small Success.

INTRODUCTION.

first with more *Reason* and *Fortitude*, and intermix less of *Passion* and *Appetite* in his Composition? For if God stands by, and sees me seduced into Ruin by Temptations, what is it to me whether he permits those Temptations to attack me from *without*, or from *within*? It is all one *to me*, and I am made equally miserable; and the Creator is, in either Case, equally cruel and unjust, in *not interposing in a Conflict*, which he knew would end so much to my Disadvantage. And 'tis surprizing, that this Gentleman, who passes so severe a Sentence upon God's *Wisdom, Goodness* and *Justice*, in *one Case*, should yet so easily dismiss them all from his *Judgment-Seat*, in *another*, tho' a Case exactly parallel to the former.

§ 16.

His Allegory
increases the
Difficulty.

Nor is this all: For the same Difficulty does not only revert back, but it also returns upon us with a greater Force. For whereas the plain literal Interpretation supposes God only to *suffer* or *permit* the Fall of Man, his allegorical one makes God the *Author* of his Fall. And again, — while the literal Sense supposes our
present

present Depravity to be only a *Disease* of our Nature, the Doctor's Allegory makes it to be — our very *Nature itself*; the Absurdity of which Supposition, I shall speak to more fully below, when I come to handle the Objections my Scheme is liable to.

Lastly, 'Tis evident that this *Allegory* agrees as badly with *other* Parts of Scripture, as it does with common Sense. For 'tis certain, that the *Merits* of *Christ* are constantly opposed to the *Demerits* of *Adam*. Either therefore both were literal Truths, or neither. And if the Death of *Christ* were no more than an Allegory, it were easy to shew — that the whole History of the *Roman* Empire, not excepting the Life and Actions of *Cicero* himself, was as mere an Allegory as the Fall of Man.

§ 17.
—And is unscriptural.

But Dr. *Middleton* was neither the only one, nor the first of his Kind. The Art of *cutting* those Knots that cannot be *untied* is of much longer standing. *Pelagius*, a *British* Monk, of about *A. D.* 400, did,

§ 18.
The *Palagian* Scheme confuted.

did, in Effect, deny the Doctrine of *Original Sin*; imputing the real, flagrant, and undeniable Corruption of our Nature, to — a Kind of Imitation of *Adam*. But then, — since God Almighty knew well what ill Effects this *first* Example would have upon the whole Human Race, how came he to set us so bad an Example as *Adam*, to copy after? And why did he not rather derive us all from some such Person as *Enoch*, or *Noah*, who would have set us a much better Example?

§ 19.
St. *Austin's*
Scheme con-
futed.

Nor does *St. Austin*, the Antagonist of *Pelagius*, mend the Matter a Jot. For he supposes, that “ God constituted *Adam*,
“ — as the *Head*, — so also the *Representative* of his whole Race. In which
“ Capacity he made a Covenant with
“ him” (of which *Covenant* by the bye, we read not one Syllable in Scripture)
“ that if *he* stood firm, then his whole
“ Race should be happy; but if *he* fell,
“ *his* Guilt should be imputed to *them*,
“ and *they* should all be deemed Sinners.”
But, to wave the Want of Scripture Evidence to support the Fact itself, that any
such

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such Covenant was ever really made with *Adam* (which is alone sufficient to overset the whole Edifice) — here the old Difficulty returns as usual. For then, why did God give us such a Head and *Representative*, as he must certainly know before hand, would *represent* us all *so badly*, as to prefer, both for *us*, and *himself*, Corruption and Misery, before Purity and Happiness? But of this enough: To return therefore to the Doctor's Objections.

He introduces them with observing, that *every Man has a Right to require from those who pretend to be Guides and Teachers of Religion, how such Passages, delivered and inculcated by them, as the undoubted Word of God, can be reconciled to the known Attributes and Perfections of the Deity?* If he means, as I presume he does, that *every Guide and Teacher of Religion*, is obliged to give a *Rationale* of every thing contained in Scripture, I flatly deny the Truth of his Position. 'Tis enough for us to prove, that what we *deliver and inculcate as the Word of God*, really is — the

C undoubted

§ 20.

A *Rationale*
not to be de-
manded.

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undoubted Word of God. And this, the meanest of us all can do with ease, from those unanswerable Evidences with which God's wise Providence has largely furnish'd us. And 'tis enough for us to shew — “ that any Dispensation to be
 “ found in God's Word, and therefore
 “ really coming from God, must cer-
 “ tainly be *reasonable in itself*, whether
 “ *we can see the Reason of it*, or no.” But, that we are obliged to give a *Rationale* of every Branch of the Christian Oeconomy, I deny; it being no Part of our Instructions. And, before I have done with my Subject, I will engage to make it clear, to the Satisfaction of every rational Man, from Reasons drawn both from the known Attributes of God, and the necessary Nature of things, that as the Scriptures *have not* laid this Task upon us, so, neither *could* they have done it, if they *ought*; nor *ought* they to have done it, if they *could*. But more of this in its Place. To go on then with our *Caviller* for the present.

When

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When an inferior Officer exhorts the Soldiers under his Charge, to execute the Orders of the *Generalissimo* with Diligence and Alacrity, — pray, is it reasonable that every Clod-pate that carries a brown *Musket*, should first, before he stirs, insist upon having a plain *Rationale* of his Commanders Orders? Shall he argue, like Dr. *Middleton*, and all other modern Deists, that — “ he is sure, that all such “ Commands as *he* cannot see the Drift “ of, for that Reason cannot possibly “ come from a Man of that Sense and “ Experience, which all the World allows his *General in Chief* to be Master “ of.” So, with Respect to us, who *pretend to be Guides and Teachers of Religion*, — ’Tis no Part of our Commission to give *Rationales*. If it happens that *we can do it*, why then, ’tis very well : but if it so falls out that we *cannot* do it — ’tis but little the worse. For, the best *Rationale* any Man can offer, where the Scripture affords no sure Grounds, either directly or indirectly, to build upon, can be no more than *probable or reasonable Conjecture*. If then a Man succeeds well,

§ 21.
— And why.

INTRODUCTION.

still — he adds nothing to the Authority of Scripture. To the Faith of the Reader, perhaps, he may add some Confirmation and Refreshment; but as to the Scriptures, they stand just as they did before. So on t'other hand, — if the *Rationalist* does not succeed at all, 'tis but little the worse; for the Scriptures are *still* the most undoubted word of God, which can contain nothing inconsistent with infinite Goodness, Wisdom or Justice. Here, for Instance, I have a few Thoughts to offer upon the Point of *Original Sin*; if I succeed, so much the better: but suppose I succeed not at all, — why still, the Evidences of Christianity stand just where they *did*, and where they ever *will* stand; *her Foundations are upon the holy Hills*; nor can they be at all weaken'd by any ill-plan'd, or worse executed Apology, which I or any Man else may offer in Behalf of it.

§ 22.
That Dr. Middleton's Objections are not put strong enough.

This premised, I return back to the Doctor's Objections; with which I shall find no further Fault *at present*, but only this, — that they are NOT PUT STRONG

ENOUGH:

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ENOUGH: Nor are they, in my Opinion, any thing near so considerable, in Regard either to WEIGHT or NUMBER, as may be brought against the true Scriptural Account of the Fall of Man. And I have observed, that you shall rarely meet with a confessed Adversary to Christianity, that knows how to do common Justice, even to his own Cause. Therefore, to lend our Adversaries a friendly Lift upon this urgent Occasion, were I an Infidel, I should chuse to argue thus, or something like it.

It may justly seem strange, that so happy and innocent a Couple, but newly created, for no other End but the Enjoyment of Happiness, should be thus left by their Maker, exposed to the Hazard and Danger of so unequal and unfair a Conflict. A Conflict, in which their Inexperience and Simplicity, were left to grapple with all the Wiles of so subtle, so experienced, and so inveterate a Foe.

§ 23.
His *first* Ob-
jection en-
forced.

But, strange as this is, it seems much stranger still, that an Act of Disobedience, seemingly of so trivial a Nature,

§ 24.
A *second* Ob-
jection from
the Intail of
the Curse.

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should be so severely punished, not only in the personal Offenders, for which something might, perhaps, be said; but that the same should descend upon all their *innocent* and even as yet *unborn* Posterity too.

§ 25.
A third Ob-
jection from
Adam's
Weakness.

And since in such “Temptations as
“ are no more than *common* to Man,
“ God is faithful, and will not suffer us
“ to be tempted above what we are able
“ to bear, but will with the Temptation
“ also make a Way for us to escape,”
Why did he not put in Practice the same
merciful Candor, upon this most im-
portant of all Occasions; when, by his
own irreversible Decree, the future Good
of the whole human Race, thus depend-
ed — either upon the *Frailty* or the Stabi-
lity of their first Progenitors?

§ 26.
A fourth from
his Inexperi-
ence.

Again. Where were those “Riches of
“ God’s Goodness, and Forbearance, and
“ Long-suffering” which we read so much
of in Scripture? — Where were all these,
when he so *suddenly* as well as *severely* pu-
nished this *first* Transgression of his new-
formed

formed Creatures? Surely, if he can *now* bear so long with the wilful, stubborn, and presumptuous Sins of wicked Men, thus daily, with a high Hand committed against his Laws; how much more should he have born patiently with an Offence — seemingly of so light a Nature, committed by these two first unexperienced Mortals?

Nor does the *Cause* of their Fall seem a Jot more consonant to Reason, than the Suddenness, Extent, and Severity of the Sentence. For if by the *Serpent* we are to understand the *Devil*, that grand Enemy of God and Man, and sworn Foe to all Goodness; it may then be asked, that since we read in Scripture that God both *looses* and *binds up Satan* at all proper Seasons, what Season could have been more proper for his Confinement, than that in which he was yet suffer'd to do the worst of Mischief? Why was he not *bound up from deceiving Mankind*, at least till the first created Pair, and some of their earlier Issue, had gained more Experience in Life, a better Knowledge of

§ 27.
A *fifth* from
the too great
Power of Sa-
tan.

his Craft and Cunning, and of Course, more Skill and Fortitude to oppose him? Instead of which, the Creator is here represented, as patiently suffering the noblest and most beautiful Part of the Work of his own Hands, to be mangled, ruined and defaced by this evil Spirit, almost *as soon as he had created it*; and the two fairest Flowers in *Paradise* to be rudely cropt by him, before they were completely blown. What! Did the all-wise Creator thus busy himself in DOING, only to give his grand Enemy an Opportunity of UNDOING?

§ 28.
A sixth from
God's creat-
ing Satan.

But why should we not go a Step further, and ask, whence came this evil Spirit? How came this grand Disturber of God's Oeconomy, this Confounder of all the wisest Councils of *Heaven*, — how came he into Existence at first? Did not God know what would be the pernicious Consequence of creating him?

§ 29.
A seventh
from the Im-
probability of
the Attempt.

If in Answer to this, we are told that God endowed him with the noblest Qualities — that he placed him in a State of
the

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the highest angelic Glory, and most exalted heavenly Bliss; but that *he himself* did capriciously, wantonly, and wilfully abandon ALL, and throw himself into the deepest Misery and Despair; — it may then be asked, how is it consonant to Reason, that a Spirit supposed to be of such exalted Endowments, and refined Abilities, should know his own Interest no better, than wilfully and deliberately to exchange Heaven for Hell?

If to this it be replied, that even God himself cannot, without a flat Contradiction, prevent any free moral Agents, from abusing the Freedom of their Will, if they are determined so to do, without turning them into mere Machines, — undoing the Work of his own Hands, — and, in Effect, annihilating all free moral Agency, which yet is the very noblest Part of his Creation, and the worthiest of himself, as being *his own Image*; all this may be allowed. But then

§ 30.
Reply to the
last Objection,

It may be asked in the last Place, why therefore did not God, to whom all his Works

§ 31.
— Confuted.

Works are as well known *before*, as *after* their Creation, — why did he not refrain from creating all such free moral Agents, as he foresaw would, in Time to come, abuse the Freedom of their Will? Why did he not confine himself to the Creation of *such only*, as he knew would use their Freedom of Will aright? Then,—all had been perfectly right, and good; all had been pure, unsullied, and undulterated with Evil? Then might it have been *truly* said, that *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*. For then, all had been happy, and nothing miserable! Then — the Song of the angelic Host, at the Birth of our Lord, might as well have been sung at the Birth of the Universe. “Glory be
“ to God on high, and on Earth Peace,
“ Good-Will towards Men.”

§ 32.
Fitness of the
Inquiry.

Thus have I done — what I hope I may venture to stile — *ample Justice* to such Objections as either *have been*, or, as far as I can see, *may yet* be started against the Reasonableness of the true literal, Scripture Doctrine of the Fall of *Adam*,
and

and the subsequent Corruption of the whole human Race. I hope I shall be able to give a pretty clear Solution, both of these, and many more than these: for it seems allowable to every one to endeavour to justify the Ways of God to Man, while such Endeavours, I mean, are kept within the Bounds of Modesty and Humility. Much indeed may be said against *dogmatizing* in such abstruse Cases; yet still, there seems to be no great Objection against such a modest Conjecture, as only leaves us just where we were *before*, in case it should appear to be wrong. If therefore these Difficulties can be fairly reconciled to our *Reason*, by such an *Analysis* as is *not repugnant* to *Scripture*; enough will be done to stop the Mouth of Infidelity. But if we should be able to go a Step further;—if our Reasonings upon these Points should appear to be but *necessary*—or perhaps only—*natural and easy Consequences*, of what we find plainly recorded in *Scripture*; then, such Reasonings may, perchance, reconcile our Scheme to the general Tenor of
the

the other *Scriptures*, as well as to *human Reason*.

§ 33.

Reason and
Revelation
never really
clash.

And certainly, since both *Reason* and *Revelation* originally flow from one and the same divine Fountain of Wisdom, Truth, and Goodness, 'tis evident they can never *really* clash or interfere. But though *Reason* properly exerted, and *Revelation* fairly and truly interpreted, can never contradict one another in reality, still, both Reason and Revelation are each of them unavoidably attended with such Inconveniences, that in many Instances they may easily *seem to us* to be inconsistent with each other, when in Fact they very closely agree. For though Reason be indeed God's most excellent Gift, yet, we to whom it is given, are not only Creatures of finite and limited Capacities, as *all* Creatures *must* be; but we are also endued with a Freedom of Will, either to *use*, *neglect* or *abuse* it, as we think fit. 'Tis also evident, that, whatever be the real Cause of it, our Will, free as it is, is yet so corrupted and depraved, that it daily inclines us ei-
ther

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ther to *neglect*, or to *abuse* and *misapply* that valuable Talent, to the basest and most unworthy Ends and Purposes.

On the other Hand, though Revelation must certainly, as coming from the Fountain of all Perfection, be, *in itself*, most perfect and compleat, most wisely adapted to the Ends for which it was intended, and can contain nothing but what is most true, most reasonable, most wise, and good, and just; still it is of Necessity attended with some Difficulties, which proceed, in general, rather from the Circumstances of those to whom the Revelation is made, than from the Nature of the things revealed. For, a Revelation must be adapted, as near as can be, to the Understandings of those to whom it is given; or else, it is no Revelation to *them*. It must therefore be expressed in some Language, and of Course must partake of such Defects as all *Language*, in general, is liable to. And if it be, once for all, committed to Writing, for the standing and perpetual Use of Mankind, it must run the common Fate of all *other* Writings.

§ 34.
But often
seem so, and
why.

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Writings. Now, when Books are grown old, and the Language they are written in is fallen into disuse, there must always be *some* Difficulty in ascertaining the genuine Sense of the *Words*; and still *more* in understanding clearly those things to which its *Metaphors* and *Allusions* relate. All which is nothing more than a necessary Consequence of that gradual Progress towards Perfection, which the World in general is making in every Age. And consequently, though it may be of some small Inconvenience, yet, *that* is by no Means to be complained of, because —'tis a slight *Evil*, resulting from a much greater *Good*. For though these Changes and Revolutions in the Customs, Languages, and Manners of Mankind, may perhaps give *Scholars* some Trouble in their Researches into *Antiquity*; still, the general Good that accrues from modern Improvements, is an ample Recompense for all that Trouble. But to proceed: 'Tis plain, you see, that let the Matter of a divine Revelation be what it will in itself, still, as it must of Necessity be delivered in Terms attended with *some* Difficulty, and
must

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must always be addressed to Creatures whose rational Faculties are limited and fallible,—evidently corrupted — and often wilfully abused and misapplied; on all these Accounts it follows, that great are the Errors into which Mankind may easily fall, in judging of heavenly things. But still, if to Humility and Sincerity of Heart, we add all the Industry, Care, and Diligence we can, something may, by God's Blessing, be done, not only towards the clearing up of many Points, where Reason and Revelation may at first Sight *seem* to clash, — but also towards the manifesting many wise and admirable Motives to the doing *some* things, which, at first view, shall seem resolvable into nothing but the sole arbitrary Will of God.

It must therefore be the noblest Exercise of the Mind, to search out and contemplate the amazing Wisdom and Goodness which God has displayed in his Dispensations to Mankind; and to clear up the principal Difficulties and Objections that have been opposed to them, either
by

§ 35.
Chiefly about
original Sin.

by the Ignorance, Folly, Malice, or Perverseness, of those, for whose sole Good they were originally intended. None having suffered more from these several Quarters, than the Point which is the Subject of the present Inquiry, I shall therefore proceed to offer some Considerations presently, that may perhaps make it appear, that God's permitting the *Fall* of *Adam*, and the subsequent Effects of it, is so far from being either cruel or unjust, that it is a most wise and admirable Means of enhancing the Sum Total of human Happiness — both here and hereafter; and consequently, that it is in reality, a most glorious Display of the divine Wisdom, Goodness and Mercy.

§ 36.
The Nature
of Reason
discussed.

But the Reader must be first apprized, that in what I have been saying about the Harmony between *Reason* and *Revelation*, I have adapted my Expressions rather to vulgar Apprehension and Manner of speaking, than to strict philosophical Truth. I shall therefore here stop short a Moment, and observe, that the Term *Reason* is too often used in so vague and inde-

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indeterminate a Manner, as to occasion much Obscurity and Error. Many who talk of the *Agreement* or *Disagreement* of *this* or *that* — with REASON, seeming to me to confound Reason with the reasoning Faculty. And because they find in themselves a Power *to reason* in some Measure and Degree, and about some few particular Points; they are presently blown up with a Notion, that they are possessed of Reason in the most compleat, perfect, and unlimited Sense of the Word. As if that Word denoted a full and absolute Power, communicated to the human Mind, of distinguishing in all Cases between true and false. A great Piece of Self-Delusion this, which makes many a Man mistake his own partial *Guesses* and *Imaginations*, and very often his own *Ignorance*, — for consummate Reason. For full, perfect, and compleat Reason, can result from nothing but *Omni-science*, and can therefore be the Property of none but God. Upon some Points indeed, where our *Ideas* are clear and distinct, as in sheer *Mathematics*, we can do pretty well; but else, no Creature,

D

how

how high and glorious soever, can be possessed of absolute Reason ; because *that* implies a full, perfect, and comprehensive Knowledge of *all things*, and *all* their several *Relations*, and of *all* the possible *Consequences* that can result from them. It implies too this important *Negative*, that you are absolutely sure, that nothing remains behind *undiscovered*, and *uncomprehended* : That is, in other Words, it pre-supposes — both absolute *Omniscience*, and absolute *Infallibility*. But the reasoning Faculty of a *Creature*, let him be either *a Man* or *an Angel*, is no more than a Power of examining, comparing, and deducing Consequences from — such Objects as are within its Ken. Therefore, the Degrees of this Faculty, and the Discoveries to be made by it, must be various in various Creatures ; according to the different Extent of their Experience, and the several Degrees of their Sagacity. Hence it follows, that when any Man shall dogmatically pronounce of any well attested Truth, that — *'tis contrary to Reason* ;—He should always be asked, *whose Reason he means* ? For certainly,

tainly, what shall seem Reason to one, may easily appear absurd to another. Of course, how variously may the same Point be judged of, by Beings placed in various Situations, or Links, of the great Chain or Scale of Nature? How differently may a Brute, a Man, and an Angel, conceive, of one and the same Object of its Imagination?

Suppose that in the vast Extent of the Universe, or among the numerous Worlds that we behold in a Starry Night, some one of them should be inhabited by a Species of free reasonable Beings, that shall consist wholly of immaterial Souls, or unbodied Spirits, confined by some secret Laws of Nature, to their own Planet or System, as *we Men* are confined to our Globe of Earth by Gravitation. Let us further suppose these Creatures never to have known, that here in *our* Solar System there is a *Planet* called *Earth*, that is inhabited by a Sort of free reasonable Creatures, whose immaterial Souls are so closely united to Bodies of Clay, as to constitute a com-

§ 37.

And illustrated by Example.

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pleat and perfect *Binity* in *Unity*, and *Unity* in *Binity*. Certainly, such Spirits as these, who had never known what it was to be cased up or cloathed with Bodies, nor had ever seen or heard of an embodied Spirit, — upon their being first told of the Nature of *us Men* here below, would (if they thought and reason'd like *us*) very probably pronounce at once, that such a Union of discordant Natures as Matter, or Flesh, and Spirit, constituting one Person, was — CONTRARY TO REASON. What should hinder their going a Step further, and (in case they are supposed to be Strangers to the Incarnation of God the Son) asserting, that as to the three divine Persons of the Deity, since each of them was an immaterial Substance or Spirit, it was easy to conceive *them* indeed, to be *so* united as to constitute a *Trinity* in *Unity*, and a *Unity* in *Trinity*; but, impossible for any such Personal Union to subsist between a thinking Spirit, and a Body of mere *inert Matter*, two things of so dissonant and heterogeneous a Nature. So that 'tis easy to conceive, that one of the plainest
and

and most obvious Truths in Nature (I mean in the Nature of *us* Men, the *all-wise* and *self-sufficient* Lords of this small *Planet* called *Earth*) may easily be supposed to puzzle the *Understanding* and REASON, and so — to overfet the FAITH even of an angelic Spirit. And if so, how easily may a mysterious Point, that is most true in itself, as well as most familiar, easy, plain, and clear to an angelic Spirit, yet puzzle and confound the reasoning Powers, and make Shipwrack of the Faith of a poor mortal Man? 'Tis therefore the *wisest*, because the most *useful* Act of Reason, to know where our Reason ought to stop; and to be assured that it ought *always* to submit itself to the infallible Decisions of undoubted *Revelation*. Let us make this Use of our Reason, and it will conduct us safely enough to that State, where all *Mysteries* will be unfolded, and where we shall clearly see, that Revelation and *true Reason*, neither ever *did*, nor ever *could* clash or interfere with each other. But I now return back to my Argument. I left off with observing, that the Fall of Man was, in Fact,

INTRODUCTION.

a glorious Display of God's Wisdom,
Goodness, and Mercy.

§ 37.
Design of this
Treatise.

I shall spend no Time in descanting upon the several Circumstances of this Event, as they stand recorded by *Moses*. If the Reader would see a most excellent and truly rational Comment upon every Branch of this most important Narration, let him consult Archbishop *King's* Sermon on the Fall of Man, published at the End of Dr. *Law's* Translation, and excellent Annotations upon the Archbishop's *Essay upon the Origin of Evil*. Nor is it my Intention to lengthen this Work, by drawing forth, into the Reader's View, all those Texts of Scripture, on which the Doctrine of Original Sin is built; much less, to vindicate those Texts from all the heretical Cavils that have been opposed to them. That Task has been so well executed by others, that I deem it needless. I shall therefore chuse to take the Doctrine for granted, and to confine myself wholly to that grand Difficulty of all, *viz.* " Why should God suffer so
" great an Evil as the Fall of *Adam*,
" and

“ and the subsequent Corruption of our
 “ human Nature, when he certainly
 “ could, with so much Ease, have pre-
 “ vented it ?” Other Disputes upon this
 Subject, are of slender Moment in Compa-
 rison to *this*, but *this* is an Inquiry worthy
 our Pursuit indeed. In order therefore
 to bring it to that satisfactory Issue,
 which it seems capable of, I shall proceed
 in the following Method.

First, I shall establish some Principles,
 necessary to be well considered, before
 we can conveniently come to the Solution
 of the main Difficulty. That done, I
 shall endeavour, upon the Strength of
 those Principles, to evince, that God’s
 permitting the Fall of Man, was wisely
 calculated to promote and enhance the
 true and ultimate Happiness of our human
 Nature. But I must honestly apprise the
 candid Reader, that the first of these
 Heads will be a dry and laborious Task ;
 and if he has not the Courage and Pati-
 ence to follow me through many a rugged
 and thorny metaphysical Path, and to
 surmount some old Prejudices, — he had

§ 38.
 The Plan of
 it.

INTRODUCTION.

better lay down the Book, and seek for some other Amusement. For, first I must prove, that (contrary to what seems to be generally thought) the *Devil's* Success in this Attempt, was no Breach sily and unexpectedly made in the intended Scheme of Providence, but *foreseen* by the Creator, and pre-determined * by him. But then, this Position will make it necessary for us to vindicate the *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, and *Justice* of God, in permitting any Kind of evil moral Agency, at all to take Place in the Universe. And this will introduce another knotty Point, a rational or probable Solution, I mean, of the strange Revolt, and invincible Obstinacy of such glorious Creatures as the fallen Angels once were. The Solution of this Difficulty will oblige us to descend into a Disquisition concerning the Nature and Consequences of *Pride*; — into the Probability of there being, in the Creation, an indefinitely ascending Scale of Beings,

* I would not be thought to use the Word *pre-determined* in the Supralaparian Sense of it; All that I mean, is, that God always foresaw the Fitness and Propriety of permitting the Scheme of *Satan* to be attended with Success,

Beings, rising higher and higher above each other, towards the Throne of God. Next, we shall be led on to a most important Inquiry concerning the *Nature, Origin, Necessity, Use, and Durability* of moral Habits, in all free reasonable Creatures. From all which, the Revolt and Obstinacy of the fallen Angels, will be shewn to be no more repugnant to Reason, than it is to Scripture. This Disquisition upon moral Habits being of the utmost Consequence to the Scheme we are upon, as well as to the whole System of Revelation in general, we shall be under a Necessity of handling it at large, — of clearing it from all popular Objections; — and, that done, we shall try the Utility of it, by applying it to some important Points, both of Speculation and Practice, that seem to have no small Light thrown upon them by it. And then, after a short Dissertation on the Circumstances of the Fall, — and defining and settling the true Nature of rational Happiness, I shall come to the Solution of the grand Point; and conclude with obviating as many Objections against the Solution here proposed,

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fed, as have hitherto occurred to me : Always taking Care to do due Justice to the Weight and Strength of each Objection. As I foresee I shall be obliged to take the Reader aside into many a *seeming* Digression, I shall make that Matter as easy to him as I can, by Recapitulations of the Argument, at proper Places ; thereby putting the Clue of it afresh into his Hands.

CHAP.



CHAP. I.

That the Fall of our first Parents, was no casual Interruption of the first intended Scheme of Providence, but foreseen, and pre-determined in the Councils of Heaven, to be effected by the evil Agency of Satan.

IT must be highly absurd to imagin, as many People at least *seem* to do, if we may judge from their manner of treating the Subject, that in the Fall of Man, the *Devil* did, as it were, *out-wit* the Creator, by throwing something like an unforeseen Difficulty in his way ; or, as if he had succeeded in a subtle, sly, and well conducted Stratagem, by which the Almighty was obliged to make, as *we* express it, *the best he could* of an unlucky Accident. As if Satan's Success in the Seduction of our first Parents, had been "*a true and real Interruption of the intended Scheme of Providence,*

§ I.
Proved from
Reason.

Chap. I. “ dence, which God could neither have
“ foreseen nor prevented.” And that he
was therefore “ forced to repair the Ru-
“ ins, and prop up the tottering Edifice
“ of human Nature in the best manner
“ he could ; or at least in the best man-
“ ner that the Nature of that unlucky,
“ and unforeseen Exigence would per-
“ mit.” I was really at a Loss where to
find Expressions to cloath all this Non-
sense in, without bordering close upon
Blasphemy, or at least upon high Inde-
cency. For this vulgar Notion of the
Fall, makes an arrant Piece of Patch-
work of the Scheme of Revelation, and
supposes the same Wisdom and Good-
ness, which shines so conspicuously in the
Creation and Government of the *material*
World, to be either wholly at a Stand,
or, at least, very negligently employed,
in projecting and executing the *Plan* of
the *spiritual* Oeconomy ; which is yet an
infinitely more noble and important Con-
cern than the other, which is no more
than *subservient* to the former. And thus,
while *the Heavens declare the Glory of God,*
and the Firmament shews his handy Work,
at

at the same Time, the spiritual Concerns Chap. I.
of the noblest Creatures here in this visible Creation, should *declare* and *shew* — his *Dis honour* rather than his *Glory*. Surely, nothing but the Want of some *rational* or *probable* Solution of the Dispensation, could ever have forced People to swallow such gross Absurdities.

For over and above what the Voice of Reason tells us of the divine Fore-knowledge, Wisdom and Power, we are clearly told in Scripture, that *known unto God are all his Ways and Works, from the Beginning of the World*, Acts xv. 18. But our *English* Translation falls short of the Original; which implies, as the *Commentators* do well observe, that God's Works were not only *foreseen*, but also *pre-determined* and *pre-contrived*. And our Saviour is stiled — *The Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, Rev. xiii. 8. From both which Passages it is evident to a Demonstration, that the whole Oeconomy of Redemption, and consequently the Fall of Man, which gave Rise to it, was known to God, that is, it existed in the
divine

§ 2.
— And from
Scripture.

Chap. I. divine Mind and Intention, from the Foundation of the World: And no Doubt we may safely add, *from all Eternity too*. Now certainly, if the Lamb of God was slain in the divine Decree and Intention, so long before the Fall of Man, 'tis evident, the permitting that Fall to be brought about by the *Devil*, was, from all Eternity, in the divine Intention too: And we may depend upon it, for Ends well worthy of that divine Wisdom, whether *we* shall be able to discover them or no. But in order to do our best towards it, we must next proceed to the Discussion of a most important Difficulty, which must be the Subject of the following Chapter.

C H A P. II.

That it is agreeable to God's Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness, to permit the Existence of Evil Moral Agency in the Universe.

§ I.
The Objection stated.

THE Difficulty is this. "Why
" should God permit so much
" moral Evil to exist in his Creation?
" For since the Scriptures represent him
" as

“ as a Hater of all Evil, why then does
“ he thus chuse to have his own Works
“ so disturbed and put out of Course, by
“ wicked moral Agents? For, tho’ it
“ be indeed impossible, even for God
“ himself, without a flat Contradiction,
“ to hinder a rational free Being from a-
“ busing his Talents, if he be resolved so
“ to do,—yet still, it may then be *further*
“ asked, — Why did not God’s Wisdom
“ *prevent* his creating all such free reason-
“ able Beings, as he knew before-hand,
“ would, in Time to come, abuse the
“ Freedom of their Will, and pervert the
“ final End of their Creation? And
“ why did he not confine himself to the
“ Creation of *those only*, who, as he
“ might easily have known before-hand,
“ would better answer the End and In-
“ tent of their Creation?” And this, I
apprehend, to be entering as deep into
the famous Question concerning the Ori-
gin of *Moral Evil*, either as human Rea-
son can well go, or as far as the Nature
of the Case either requires or admits.

This

Chap. II.

§ 2.

Solved from
the Utility of
Moral Evil in
the Hands of
God.

This is the Difficulty which so greatly puzzled all the Sages of Antiquity, and drove them into such shocking Absurdities to get rid of it. It will, however, admit of a clear and easy Solution, if it be but considered, that discordant, opposite, and jarring Principles, are often *necessary* towards the carrying on the Government both of the *natural* and the *moral* World. In the natural World we see plainly, that neither Animal nor Vegetable Life could subsist, without that intestine Motion, or perpetual Fermentation, which takes its Rise from Principles quite dissonant and disagreeable to each other. And to these — a Philosopher will add the Necessity of a *Repulsion* in some Particles of Matter, as well as an *Attraction*. So that in the End, all these Oppositions, Jarrings, Discords, and Disagreements, among the various and heterogeneous Particles of Matter, do, in Fact, produce all that is either useful or beautiful in the *Animal*, as well as the *Vegetable* Creation. And just so it is in the *moral* World. There are *Times* and *Seasons* in which the good Government of moral Agents, or free reasonable Beings, cannot

cannot possibly be carried on, without a like Mixture of moral Good and Evil. Different Notes are not more necessary to the Production of musical Harmony, than a Mixture of moral Good and Evil is *sometimes* (for I don't say *always*) requisite to compose that Harmony of God's providential Dispensations, which alone can bring all his wise and good Designs, to their intended Maturity and Perfection.

To give an Instance or two. Had it not been for the Persecution and Opposition of *Jews, Heathens, Atheists, and Heretics* of old; 'tis hardly, if at all to be conceived, how Christianity could either have been established *at first*, upon any rational Bottom, or ever been well understood, or heartily professed and practised. For the best Arguments that Christian Revelation is built upon, are drawn from the very *Opposition* it met with. To the *Jews* we are indebted for the Evidence we have of the Authenticity of the *Prophecies*; to both *Jews* and *Heathens* for the *Truth* and *Certainty* of the *Miracles*, as bearing an unwilling Record of them. To *Here-*

§ 3.

Instances of its Use in former Times.

E

tics

Chap. II. *tics* of all sorts we are obliged, for a clear Proof, that the sacred Text is preserved, in its original Purity, because their mutual Spleen and Malice, made them such very diligent Spies upon one another, as well as upon the Orthodox, that no Party could possibly corrupt the Scriptures. To the Ten Persecutions under the Heathen Emperors, during the first three hundred Years of the Church, we owe the Evidence we have of the Honesty and Sincerity of the first Race of *Christians*, from whom we received our Faith. And it is from those Persecutions; that we are able to draw an Answer, demonstratively plain and clear, to that trite — that stupid — that ridiculous Surmise, — that Scandal to the common Sense of all *Deists*, — “ That
 “ Christianity was originally no more
 “ than a Piece of Priest-Craft, or an Engine of State, to keep the World in
 “ Awe.” But of this hereafter. Now, such were the Advantages, which the good Providence of God extracted from out of the Vice and Ignorance, the Malice and Wickedness of the *Jews*, *Heathens*, *Atheists*, and *Heretics* of old. It
 was

was wise therefore in God to permit those Chap. II.
Evils *to work for a Time*, because without
them, the World had been left desti-
tute of the Blessings and Advantages
of Christianity.

So again, to add one Instance more of
like sort. It is well known to those, who
by reading or travelling, have made them-
selves acquainted with the present State of
the World, that, how badly soever Chris-
tianity may be practised here in *England*,
yet, there is no Country upon Earth where
it is so well taught and understood as it is
here. Which Advantage is evidently ow-
ing, partly to the Ignorance, Folly, and
Malice of its Enemies; and partly to that
Liberty of the Press, which gives them an
Opportunity of venting their Spleen against
it. For these Mens Cavils only make the
Scriptures more diligently studied, more
nicely examined, more closely looked into,
and of Course the Grounds of our Faith dai-
ly better and better understood by our Cler-
gy; who without such a Spur as this, might,
in less than Half a Century, sink down to
a Par with so many *Spanish* or *Italian* Friars,

§ 4.
—And in mo-
dern Times.

Chap. II. and be as little able, as any of them, to defend the *Christian Faith*, against a common Enemy. For all which Advantages, the establish'd Religion of these Kingdoms, stands indebted principally to the Ignorance and Malice, to the Knavery and Folly of its Opponents; which, tho' great Evils in themselves, yet are they in this Instance, productive, as we see, of the greatest Good. To return therefore back to my Argument,—the Utility and Necessity of God's permitting the Existence of Evil, in some Cases.

§ 5.
This Utility
solved.

The Argument stands thus. It is worthy of the Wisdom and Goodness of God, to introduce into the Universe, both *every Kind of Good*, and *as much of every Kind* as it is capable of receiving. Hence follows the Necessity of God's *permitting* some Sorts and Degrees of Evil to exist, whenever such evil is *necessary* to introduce a much greater Degree of *Good*: Because in this Case, the Universe, upon an Average is improved and made better, even by the very Evil that is suffered to enter in and mix with it.

And

And this leads us to a clear Solution of that important Part of the Difficulty, "Why did God create any such Free Moral Agents, as he foresaw would abuse the Freedom of their Will? And why did he not rather confine himself to the Creation of such Free Reasonable Beings only, as he foresaw would use their Freedom aright?" The Answer is this. God's Permission of such Moral Evil, was *wise*, and *just*, and *necessary*; because without it, he must have precluded himself from introducing into the Universe, all those several Sorts of *Good* which *can* be drawn from out of Moral *Evil* only. Or, in other Words, there are Cases in which the Intervention of a wicked Moral Agent, is a Tool so necessary, that Omnipotence itself, without a Contradiction, cannot work without it. If therefore the Malice and Wickedness of any evil Being, furnishes God's Providence with an Opportunity of drawing a much greater Proportion of *Good* out of a small Degree of *Evil*, it must be both wise and good in the Creator to permit *that* Evil to exist. Accordingly, we see it is always the great De-

Chap. II.

§ 6.

— And further explained.

Chap. II. light, as it were, of the Deity, to draw Good out of Evil; just as it is the unwearyed Occupation of the Devil, to draw Evil out of Good. And this was the very Case of the *old Serpent* who deluded our first Parents in *Paradise*; for we shall see, by and by, how instrumental his Malice and Wickedness were, to the enhancing, and immortalizing the Happiness of the human Race.

§ 7.
—And inforced.

In a Word; as God has made us *Active* and *Free*, he must of course prepare us Matter for our Activity and Freedom to work upon. And what nobler Motive to employ *both*, than a constant Spur to us to go on for ever, pursuing and enjoying all the Good we can attain of every Kind, — abhorring and avoiding all Evil, and heightening the Relish of all the Good we enjoy, by an experimental Sense of its opposite Evils, and a pleasing Consciousness that we have used our *Freedom* and employed our *Talents* aright?

§ 8.
This Dispensation vindicated.

But we must observe further, that as God's *Wisdom* stands fully cleared in this Kind

Kind of Dispensation, so do his *Goodness* and his *Justice* too. For such Moral Agents as thus abuse the Freedom of their Will, are themselves alone to be blamed for it; for God never *causes*, but only *permits* their Wickedness. And this latter he must of Necessity do, except he were either to exterminate the whole System of Free Moral Agency from out of the Universe, or were to work a flat Contradiction. But the former would clash both with his *Wisdom* and *Goodness*; and the latter, even Omnipotence itself cannot do; for a *Contradiction* is no more an Object of *Power*, than *Sounds* are an Object of *Sight*, or *Colours* of *Hearing*. A Contradiction is properly — *nothing*, or a *Non-entity*; it is only a Jargon of empty *Sounds*, that carry no kind of *Idea* with them. Thus, when I say God cannot make a *Square Triangle*, I *seem* to say something, but in Effect say just nothing; for these two Words *Square* and *Triangle*, have each of them, indeed, when separate, a corresponding *Idea*, yet, compound them together, and they shall neither excite any *Idea* in our *Minds*, nor have any external

Chap. II. correlate in Nature. I chose to dwell thus at large upon the Nature of a Contradiction, for the sake of some who are ready enough to complain of the *hard Sayings* in Scripture, and *hard Things* in some of the divine Dispensations, — and yet are full as ready to exact that most unmerciful Task of *Contradiction*, from the Creator; only to quiet their Scruples, and humour their own Fancies. Upon the Whole then, as it is no Affront to God's Power, to deny that he can work a Contradiction; so neither is it any Derogation from it, to say, that he cannot hinder a Free Moral Agent from abusing the Freedom of his Will, and behaving wickedly, if he is resolutely determined so to do.

§ 9.
And its absolute Necessity shewn.

In good Truth, God Almighty, by making Moral Agents *Free*, does as it were, consent to put the Regulation of their Wills, out of his *own* Power, and to vest it in *theirs*. But by making them at the same Time *Rational* as well as *Free*, he still subjects them to the Province of his Wisdom; but — to the Province of his Wisdom *only*. Hence, he can apply none but

but *rational* Motives, to make them chuse Chap. II.
 their own Happiness, and act aright; but
 these must ever, of necessity, be in their
 own Nature *resistable*, by all those who will
 boldly and wantonly venture all, by e-
 qually sporting with their own Happi-
 ness, and with God's Goodness. But,
 though *some* may desperately and wilful-
 ly incur Misery by this Constitution of
 Things, still, God Almighty's Part in it
 is most justly and wisely performed. For
 this Oeconomy or Disposition of Things
 can never be altered but *for the worse*.
 For, as Things now stand, all Free A-
 gents are dealt with by their Maker, in a
 Manner properly suited to that Rank in
 the Scale of Beings, in which they are
 placed; they are treated like the noble
 Creatures he has made them; like Crea-
 tures set far above inert Matter, and Ve-
 getables, as well as above the Brute Crea-
 tion, which must be ruled by *Bit and Bri-
 dle*;—ruled, not by *Persuasion*, but *Compul-
 sion only*. Therefore what God formerly
 told the rebellious *Israelites*, holds equally
 true of all wicked Spirits, whether *fallen
 Men* or *fallen Angels*; — *Thou hast destroyed
 thyself, O Israel.* Hos. xiii. 9.

C H A P.

C H A P. III.

*A Rationale of the Revolt and invincible
Obstinacy of the Fallen Angels.*

§ I.
The Case sta-
ted.

HAVING thus evinced the *Wisdom*, *Goodness*, and *Justice* of God, in permitting the Existence of evil moral Agency in the World; our third Step must be, to enquire how far the Supposition of the *Revolt* or *Fall* of such glorious Beings as the evil Angels *once* were, together with their invincible Obstinacy, and incurable Spleen and Malice against God and Goodness, are agreeable to human Reason. For if this Point be not cleared up by the Way, the *literal Doctrine of Original Sin* will still labour under great Difficulties. And indeed that Beings of such exalted Faculties, should be at all capable of such amazing *Madness* and *Folly*, as knowingly and willingly to throw themselves into the deepest Misery, from out of those heavenly Joys they had possessed so long; — that they should be so silly as to prefer Misery to Happiness, — and so mad as to think of opposing
their

their own finite Strength, to God's infinite Power, — all these things, I say, are indeed, at first Sight, most *strange* and *amazing*, but far from being *impossible*; and consequently there is nothing in the Supposition itself that need shock the Faith of any rational Man, provided only that the Fact be but well attested.

Chap. III.

We are told that Mankind *are made but a little* lower than the Angels; and we know, that since we stand at the Head of this terrestrial Globe, the lowest Order among the angelic Beings must, of course, be but just the next Link, or Step above *us* in the great Chain or Scale of Nature. If therefore we do but consider what daily passes among ourselves, we shall readily acknowledge, that something of *similar* Nature, may easily be supposed to have happened among them who are next above us. For, as to any thing unnatural, difficult, or improbable, in the Supposition of their Fall, let us only suppose the Faculties of my Dog to be miraculously enlarged, just so as to give him an *Idea* of the prodigious Advantages that Mankind

reap

§ 2.

And explained by Instances.

Chap. III. reap from *Reason, Revelation, Books, Conversation, Arts, and Sciences*. Or, in short, so as to comprehend for a while, into how much more noble and exalted a State God hath created *Men*, than he hath afforded to the Species of *Dogs*. In this Case, — how would it be possible for the poor Animal, who never yet was moved by other Principles than those of Fidelity and Gratitude to his Master for feeding him; how, I say, would it puzzle and confound all his new born Faculties, to conceive that so exalted a Creature as *Man*, loaded by the Love and Beneficence of his Creator, with so many amazing and stupendous Blessings, — should yet be capable — sometimes of not knowing *his* Master at all, — frequently, of taking no Notice of him, — thanking him for nothing, — and regarding nothing that he says? Nay further, that *some* Men should go so far as to ridicule and revile his Actions; and even to write Books against him, in order to infect others with their own Baseness and Stupidity. Now, we all know it to be certainly true, in Fact, that some or other of us are daily acting
in

in this Manner; but still, the Difficulty Chap. III.
would be, how to make an honest Brute
Animal, though of such improved Con-
ceptions as I supposed, be able at first
Sight, to conceive it possible for such
Creatures as *Men*, to behave in so irra-
tional a Manner, with regard both to
their Maker and themselves. Doubtless
he would turn Infidel, and cry out that
such a Supposition was *shocking to Reason*;
and the *Gallows* and *Whipping-Post* would
be as much a *Jest* to him, as *Hell-Torments*
have been to some of *us*. And just such
is the Difficulty some of *us* may have, to
conceive how the fallen Angels could pos-
sibly prevail upon themselves, to dally
with and forfeit the heavenly State of Bliss.

But the natural Reason of the Thing is
pretty plain; for the best and noblest Fa-
culties, when wilfully abused and corrup-
ted, must always be more virulently bad,
than those of a lower Degree are capable
of being. And therefore, as the Actions
of a *mad Dog*, are nothing near so extra-
vagant as those of a *Man run mad*; so,
the Folly and Stubbornness of an *Angel*
distracted,

§ 3.
And account-
ed for.

Chap. III. *distracted*, may easily be supposed to exceed the Extravagancies of a *distracted Man*. In fine, when the noblest Faculties of a reasonable Being, given him by his Maker to conduct him to endless Happiness, — when these are all wilfully *abused* and *perverted*; it must then fare with the Possessor of them, as it would with that Traveller, who should stubbornly pursue the Road opposite to the right one: The better he is *mounted*, and the harder he *rides*, the further must he wander from the Point. I conclude therefore, that there is nothing contrary to common Sense and sound Reasoning, in supposing that these once glorious and most happy Spirits, were capable of capriciously and wantonly forfeiting that exalted State of Bliss, in which they were at first created.

§ 4.
Reality of
their Fall e-
vinced.

The next thing therefore to be settled, is, whether or no it be true, in Fact, that such Spirits have really fallen or not? Now, this being a Fact — not indeed *necessary*, but only possible in the Nature of Things to have happened; it follows, that
we

we can discover it, only by the same Chap.III.
Means by which we discover *other* Facts
of an historical Nature: And that is —
by being told of them. Now, a Fact of
this Nature, supposed to have happened
before the Creation of the World, at
least before the Creation of our *solar Sys-*
tem, can be made known to us, only by
the Help of some Spirit of superior Rank
to Man. And as we are not, by the Sup-
position, to expect this Information from
any of those who fell, since their Enmity
to God and Man, must incline them to
conceal so useful a Lesson from *us*, it is
plain, that such Information can come
only from some superior Spirit, of good
and gracious Inclinations to Mankind.
Such preter-natural Information is the
same Thing that *St. Paul* calls *spiritual*
Discernment, which in modern Language,
is more generally known by the Name of
Revelation. Therefore here alone, were
there no other Reason for it, there are
sufficient Motives for God to give Man-
kind *some* Revelation; were it only to tell
him, what otherwise he could never
know, that he has a fierce, subtile and in-
visible

Chap. IV. visible Enemy, who daily plots his Ruin; and who therefore must be withstood, by such Means as God, who alone can tell us how to deal with him, can best inform us of, and best help us to. The Fall then of these Angels, is a Thing credible in itself; consequently, when the Scripture tells us that *these Spirits kept not their first Estate, but left their own proper Habitation, and are reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day* — this Proposition, I ſay, is very conſiſtent with our natural Reaſon.

C H A P. IV.

A View of the Nature and Conſequences of Pride.

§ 1.
Conſciouſ-
neſs of high
Perfection the
uſual Origin
of Pride.

BUT here, it ſeems neceſſary to my Argument, as well as Matter of uſeful Caution and Admonition to ourſelves, to enquire a little into the probable Cauſe of the Revolt and Fall of the Devil and his Accomplices. For whether it be from a Concurrence of ſimilar Cauſes, or
from

from the spreading of some Contagion, Chap. IV.
true it is, that many Persons seem to have caught the Devil's Distemper, and to labour under the same *Symptoms*. Now the Scripture tells us, that *Pride* was the *Condemnation of the Devil*. And Pride, we know, arises from too frequent and intense a Contemplation upon our own Perfections and Endowments, to the Neglect of *him* from whom we received them. Hence, the higher and nobler those Perfections are, which any created Being is possessed of, the greater Danger is he in from this Sin of Pride; except he keep the strictest Guard upon himself. For those very Perfections which secure him from Failings and Weaknesses of other Kinds, must otherwise most violently and fatally hurry him on to Pride. So that the less likely such a Being is to fall into any *other* Kind of Folly, the more liable is he to run into this, the greatest of all Follies; I mean Self-sufficiency, Independence upon God, and vainly setting up for ourselves.

F

I think

Chap. IV.

§ 2.

This applied
to the Fall of
Satan.

I think we may venture to go a Step further, and assert, without much Danger of being deemed too *dogmatical*, that there is no other Cause of their Fall to be assigned, with any tolerable shew of Probability. For, that their Fall was owing to some Defect, Want, or Imperfection *or other*, is past all Dispute, because they actually fell. Now, had this Defect lain any where else but in the Pride of their own Hearts, and the Stubbornness of their own Wills, I would ask, what other Defect can there be, either in Heaven or Earth, which God cannot with Ease supply? Had they laboured under any *other* Weakness, save only this greatest of all Follies, all other Defects might have been supplied by the Aids of God's holy Spirit, which is all sufficient, and which is never denied to such of his Creatures as are in Want of it, — provided only that they are sensible of their Wants, and willing to apply to him for Relief; it having been amply proved already, that without their own Consent and Desire, God can neither send those Aids, nor *they* make use of them if he did. For surely it cannot

not be supposed, that God should so readily tender those gracious Assistances *to us* who are Creatures of inferior Rank, and yet deny them, in Case they are wanted, to those higher Beings, to whom he has vouchsafed the noblest Marks of Favour and Goodness, in placing them so far above us the Sons of *Adam*. Had this been the Case, it had been a far more puzzling Difficulty than any one hitherto started. We may therefore reasonably conclude, that *Pride* is a very rational, if not the only Account that can be given of the Revolt of the fallen Angels: — Pride, I mean, together with its necessary Concomitants. For Pride, we know, has a close and intimate Connection with *Ambition, Envy, Malice, and Discontent*. All which may very reasonably be supposed, to find room enough to display themselves, even among the angelic Beings *themselves*, without a due Care, on their Parts, to keep themselves firm in their Allegiance to God and Goodness. But, as this Notion is founded on a Supposition of that *Subordination* which must necessarily result from a *Scale of Beings*,

Chap. V. one above another; 'tis necessary that we here add a Word or two, concerning the *Probability* of there being such a Scale in the Nature of Things: For which, I think, much may be said.

C H A P. V.

That there is, probably, an indefinite, ascending Scale of Beings.

§ I.
Because a visible *descending* Scale.

WHOEVER considers the manifold Wisdom, Goodness, and Power of God, displayed in the Works of the visible Creation, will readily conclude, that the Communication of Happiness to as many living Creatures as are capable of tasting any Degrees of it, must be his great Delight. In pursuance of this Principle, he may perhaps be daily creating new *Systems* of Creatures, in different Parts of the Universe; but in those Parts that fall within the Ken of mortal Eyes, we know by Experience, that he has created as great a Number and Variety of Animals, as can well exist. The
Air,

Air, the Earth, and the Sea, are filled Chap. V.
with their respective Inhabitants; nay
there is hardly a Plant, a Fruit, a Leaf,
or even a Clod of Dirt, that does not
afford both Food and Lodging to some
peculiar Sett of Guests. The very Bodies
of Animals afford Shelter and Support to
other Animals called *Vermin*; and we can
discover by Glasses, that the Bodies of
Vermin are themselves fed upon by o-
ther little Creatures that are *Vermin* to
them. And how far even *Microscopic Ani-*
malcules may be succeeded by *Animalcules*
yet proportionably smaller than them-
selves, we know not: We only know
that it is hard to set Bounds to infinite
Wisdom and Power, working upon Mat-
ter infinitely divisible. Nor is the Size
of those Animals we are acquainted with,
more various than their different Degrees
of Perfection; there being several Sorts
of living Creatures that approach so near
to the Vegetable *Genus*, that Naturalists
stand puzzled under which Head to rank
them: So various are the Gradations a-
mong the Creatures *below* us.

Chap. V.

§ 2.

An ascending
Scale proved
by Analogy.

Now, if from Creatures *below* us, we would endeavour to rise up to some Notion of those *above* us, we can follow no safer Rule than that of *Analogy*; which is “a Manner of Reasoning drawn from
“ that Uniformity that is observable, in
“ the Works both of Nature and Providence. From which Uniformity that
“ we have *already* experienced, we justly
“ conclude, that in all *similar* Instances,
“ or Cases of *like* Nature, God’s Manner
“ of acting in such Cases as we *have not*
“ experienced, is also *alike* or *similar*; be-
“ cause — what is wise and fit in one
“ Case, is also wise and fit in all other
“ Cases, that are (*to the best of our Judgment*) Cases of like Sort.” To judge therefore by *Analogy*, it will appear reasonable, that the Gradations among the Animals *below* the human Race in Dignity and Perfection, are nothing near so wonderful and amazing, as those among the glorious Beings *above* us. For the most high and glorious Archangel, let his Perfections be ever so great, or let them increase ever so fast, and ~~that~~ too — even to Eternity; yet he will for
ever

ever be a *Creature*, and of course, will Chap. V.
for ever be at an infinite Distance from
the Throne of God. All which laid to-
gether, is enough to make one — at least
conjecture, if not *conclude*, that there is
even in the Heavenly Orbs, a Scale of
Beings ascending one above another, in
some certain *Ratio* or Proportion, known
perhaps to *him alone* who *has ordered all*
*Things in Number, Weight, and Measure.**
From all which it follows, that without
a proper Guard upon themselves, there
may be Fewel even in Heaven itself, for
the Fire of Ambition, Envy, Malice, and
Discontent, and repining against God, to
feed on; since the *lower* may ever envy
and malign the *upper* Orders. And Dis-
positions like these, are enough to make
a Hell, nay the worst Kind of Hell, even
in Heaven itself; no Torture being worse
than that gnawing Worm, which a free
and reasonable, but corrupted Being, may
carry about in its own Breast.

Deduction
from thence.

Nor is it hard to assign some *possible* or
rather *probable* Causes, of the invincible

§ 3.
Obstinacy of
the fallen An-
gels.

F 4

Stub-

* Wisdom xi. 20.

Chap. VI. *Stubbornness*, and incurable *Madness* of such miserable Spirits. A Solution of it may be drawn from the *necessary and unavoidable Force of Habits*, in all Free Reasonable Creatures. But this is a Point of that high Consequence, not only to the Scheme I here propose, but also to the whole Body of revealed Religion too; that I shall here take the Liberty to stop short, and examine it to the Bottom: And the rather, because I don't remember any where to have met with any satisfactory Account of the *Nature, Origin, Use, and Necessity of Moral Habits* in Free Reasonable Beings.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Nature of Moral Habits.

§ I.
Rise of moral
Habits.

THE Intention of Almighty God in creating Free Reasonable Moral Agents, was, to make them capable of the Enjoyment of Rational Happiness. To this Intent, he *so* forms their Minds, that they may naturally delight in their Existence;

istence ; of course — rejoice in using and exerting their own Powers and Faculties ; and so — be pleased with their own free Elections and Actions, and that too — merely because they are their own.* Now all moral Habits take their Rise from that Pleasure with which we survey our past Actions. Such Survey is a necessary Consequence of *Reflection* and *Memory* ; and these again being two of the most essential Limbs of the *Rational Faculty*, are of course most essentially necessary to the Formation and Constitution of Rational Agency ; and consequently — to the Enjoyment of Rational Happiness : As we shall see more fully below, when we come to discuss the true Nature of Rational Happiness.† Therefore the *Force of Habits*, and the Capacity of enjoying *Rational Happiness*, have an indissoluble Connection with each other ; which is enough to justify God's Wisdom and Goodness in this Constitution of Things : Since all Habits, both good and bad, virtuous and vicious, pious and sinful, must, of Necessity,

Their Connection with rational Happiness.

* See Dr. Law's admirable Notes upon A. B. King's Origin of Evil.

† Below in Chap. x.

Chap. VI. fity, be all of them originally contracted in one and the same Way.

§ 2.
May grow in-
superable in
Time.

Again ; if we consider how easily all Moral Habits take Root ; how quickly they grow, and how soon they do, as it were, *incorporate* themselves into the very Nature of the Soul, twining about the Heart, till they seem to be consolidated with it ; — considering all this, I say, what should hinder, but that bad Habits, obstinately persisted in for a Time, may at length quite vanquish and subdue the Agent, who has thus wilfully cherished and nursed them up in his own Breast ? If this should be the Case, and if Bad Habits contracted by moral Agents, should, after a certain Period, become fixed and immoveable, they must of course become the *natural and necessary* Foundations of eternal Misery, by incapacitating the Agent, either for Amendment or Repentance. If it be further asked, to what immediate Cause this Incapacity of Repentance and Amendment may reasonably be attributed ? I answer, that though 'tis indeed, very hard to dive so deep into the
Nature

Nature of the human Soul, and other Chap. VI.

immaterial Spirits, yet 'tis possible the Case may be this, or something like it. Some Sins may throw the Soul into something like a *maniacal* Disorder; or something that shall render it an unfit Object of any rational Address, which yet is the only kind of Address that *can* be offered to it; consistently, I mean, with the Freedom of its Will; Which, as we observed above, never *must*, nor *can*, nor *ought* to be violated. For if the Body, when under some particular Disorders, can *so* affect the Soul, as to bring on a *Mania*, why should not inveterate evil *Habits* be able to do the same? Especially if we consider, that moral Habits may, in the Nature of Things, be at least as intimately connected with—or related to—the Nature and Essence of the Soul, as any material Humours of the Body possibly *can be*. We may therefore safely conclude, that as far as we can see, there is nothing in the Nature of Things that makes at all against—but much *for* the present Position, *viz.* that *Evil Habits* may in Time become invincible, or grow into a Sort of incurable Madness. And this

The probable Reason why.

Chap. VI. this seems to be the Case of the fallen Angels, and to proceed from Sins of a spiritual Nature, the Bottom and Root of which is generally *Pride*; for what but Madness *can* make them persist in sinning and rebelling against *infinite Wisdom*, arm'd with *infinite Power*?

§ 3.
The Argument further
illustrated.

Again; if we observe what passes among our own *Species*, we shall find that Sins and Vices of this Class, are, *by Nature*, the most virulent in those of the most refined Wits, and exalted Genius's. I say *by Nature*, for by Prudence, Art, and Care, they may certainly be much corrected. However, from hence we may judge, that in Spirits of a higher Order in the Scale of Nature, these Passions and Affections, when wilfully nursed up and indulged, must be far more strong, and work more violent Effects, than any Passions of the like Sort *can* produce amongst *us*, and must therefore be the natural Foundations of more exquisite Misery. But to proceed. As habitual Sins of the *Spiritual* Class, may thus Occasion an incurable Kind of Madness in the Soul; so, those

those of a carnal Nature, such as *Intemperance, Lust, Avarice, &c.* these may reduce the Soul to such a Meanness of Taste and Inclination, and blunt the Edge of its noblest Faculties to such a Degree, as absolutely to disqualify it for those high and noble Contemplations, which must be so considerable a Branch of true Rational Happiness hereafter. By bad Habits of the former, or spiritual Class, we commence *Devils*; by those of the latter Kind *Brutes*: Either Way naturally disqualified for Rational Happiness, and fitted only for Misery. But when both these unite in the same Breast, as they frequently do, then is the Possessor of them miserable indeed; even without the Addition of that elemental Fire, with which we are yet certainly assured it will be attended. And hence, no doubt, it is, that we meet with so many, and so pathetic Exhortations in Scripture, — *to work out our own Salvation with Fear and Trembling, — to make our Calling and Election sure, — to turn us from all our Wickedness, that our Sin may not be our Destruction; — to make us a new Heart, and a new Spirit; — for*

Chap. VI.

Chap. VI. — *for why will ye die, O House of Israel; for I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, says the Lord God, wherefore turn ye and live.* — And many more Passages of Scripture are there, of like import, and almost endless to recount, the plain and evident Drift of all which, is, to exhort us to make a wise use of the Freedom of our Will, by watching carefully over the Habits which we wilfully contract here in *this Life*, since our future Happiness and Misery, so much depends upon them.

§ 4.
Habits durable.

For that the Habits which we here contract, will not be destroyed by the Stroke of Death, but will continue to attend the Soul in its future State, is evident from the whole Tenor of Scripture, as our best Divines, I think, are clear. Therefore, though all that has been said concerning the *Nature, Origin, Use, and Necessity* of moral Habits, should be given up: — Though it should be allowed to be an impracticable Task to shew *à priori*, or from the Nature of the Soul itself, that our moral Habits *must* accompany it into its future State; since, as the Eye sees all Things

Things but itself, so, the Soul can more Chap. VI.
easily contemplate *any* thing than its own
Nature; — I say, even allowing all this,
still, the Truth, certainly, and evident
Necessity of the Thing itself, is plain and
undeniable: Since the contrary Suppo-
sition must clash with some of the prin-
cipal Attributes of God. For, one thing
at least is clear,—that Moral Habits must
be closely connected with *Memory* and
Consciousness: And that a Consciousness of
what we have done *here*, *must* attend the
Soul *hereafter*, is very certain, because
otherwise the *Identity* of the Soul, is, TO
ALL INTENTS AND PURPOSES, utterly
destroyed. And what will be the Con-
sequence of *that*? Why *then* down goes
at once the whole *System* of Rewards and
Punishments hereafter, without a Suppo-
sition of which, what they call *Natural*
Religion can no more subsist than Reve-
lation can. For, if the Personal Identity
of the Agent, be, *to all Intents and Pur-
poses*, abolish'd, God Almighty *may* in-
deed, in that Case, make such an im-
material Substance, so stript of its Con-
sciousness, an Object of his Kindness or
of

Chap. VI. of his Cruelty; but it is evident that he can never either *reward* or *punish* it: Because *Reward* and *Punishment* evidently bear a strict Relation to the Consciousness of that Agent who is so *rewarded* or *punished*. If therefore we retain our Memory and Consciousness in a future State, as most certainly we *must* and *shall*, we must of Necessity retain our moral Habits too. That we shall all be judged *hereafter*, for what we have done in *this* Life, is a Dictate of *natural* as well as *revealed* Religion; but pray, how can that be called a *Judgment*, which does not at the same Time, include an Appeal to the Man's own Memory and Consciousness of his past Actions?

§ 5.
Proved from
the Nature of
Retribution.

And be it here observed, that the Argument on which the future Durability of moral Habits is built, holds good, upon Supposition that there is *any* kind of Retribution of Good or Evil hereafter. For if our good or bad Actions will be rewarded or punished hereafter, those Rewards and Punishments *can* flow but from *one* or *other*, of the two following Causes,

or

or from a Mixture of *both*. Either such Chap. VI.
Retribution must proceed, — first, by natural Consequence, from the Actions themselves; that is, from the Effect which such Actions naturally and necessarily have upon the Agent; and that again is — from the necessary Consequence of the Habits formed by those Actions: Or, secondly, such Retribution must be wholly of a *positive* Nature, like the Rewards and Punishments of an earthly Judge, which, in the Nature of Things, either might or might *not* have been conferred or inflicted. Or, thirdly, this Retribution must result (as no doubt but it must and will) from a Mixture of *both* these. I mean, that our good and virtuous Habits, will, besides the Happiness they are naturally productive of, meet also with *other* very great Rewards from God, superadded to them in a positive Manner: and so, *vice versa*, as to bad Actions. Now, which ever of these Systems we embrace; whether we maintain a future Retribution to proceed wholly from the bare Nature of good and bad Deeds; — or wholly from such *instituted* or *positive* Rewards and Punish-

G
ments

Chap. VI. ments of the supreme Judge as shall have no Dependence upon, or Connection with —our past Actions; or (which is certainly the real Truth of the Case) partly from one, partly from t'other;—I say, upon any of these Suppositions, 'tis evident beyond all Contradiction, from what has been said, that our moral Habits *must* survive the Separation of the Soul and Body. And if they survive *that* Period, and can stand the Shock of that greatest Revolution that is ever to befall our Nature, we may fairly ask, what shall ever be able to obliterate them?

§ 6.
— And confirmed by
Scripture.

Let us observe next, that this important Truth, so consonant both to common Sense and Reason, and to the principal Attributes of the Deity, as well as to the general Tenor of Revelation, is amply confirmed by particular Texts of Scripture, as many of our best Divines have clearly evinced: And perhaps none more clearly than *Rymer* in his *General Representation of Revealed Religion, Part 2, Chap. 3.* I shall just mention two of his Arguments. The first is drawn from
what

what St. *Paul* tells us of the Habit of Christian Charity, — that it shall never fail; that is, that it shall have both Occasion, Scope, and Opportunity to exert itself, even to all Eternity. Upon which Bottom *solely*, the Apostle recommends this Habit, as a more valuable Acquisition than *any*, either of those miraculous Gifts, or of those moral Graces, which are to cease as useless, when this Life ends. And if this Habit of Charity, says our Author, attends the Mind into a future State, there can be no Reason to question, but that others do so too. That, indeed, is very true, but he should have added the Reason why; which is manifestly this, — because all Habits take their Rise from a similar Origin: Our *Sympathies* from that *Pleasure*, and our *Antipathies* from that *Pain*, with which we have been used to survey our past *Actions* or *Passions*.

And by plain
Deductions
from thence.

His second Argument is drawn from those Expressions in Scripture, in which the Holy Ghost recommends and exhorts our Progress in Christian Perfection, under the Metaphor of *Edification* or *Building*.

§ 7.
From Edifica-
tion recom-
mended.

Chap. VII. *ing.* Now, says he, *to what* Purpose so much Concern, why is so much Care taken to build up what must be so soon ruined by Death? And his Argument is unanswerable. This Scheme, however, is liable to some Objections, which deserve to be well cleared up. I shall therefore make these the Subject of the following Chapter.

C H A P. VII.

Objections from Scripture answered.

§ I.
 Texts ascribing
 Salvation
 to Grace, con-
 sidered.

THERE are no *solid* Objections to be brought from Scripture, against what has been advanced upon the Subject of moral Habits: But some *seeming* ones there doubtless are. As to those Texts then, that attribute our Salvation, not to *our own Righteousness*, or *our own Works*, but to *God's Grace and Mercy*; 'tis answered. In the first Place, many of those Texts that are alledged to this Purpose, do not mean our *final* or *eternal* Salvation, but, only our being, here in this World,

put

put into a salvable State; or such a State, Chap. VII.
as if persevered in, will certainly bring us
to final Salvation. Witness that of *Titus*,
iii. 5. (*Not by Works of Righteousness which*
we have done, but according to his Mercy he
saved us, &c.) which is a Text evidently
of this Number.

And 2dly, Those Texts which *really do*
impute our final or eternal Salvation to
God's Grace and Favour, do none of
them *exclude* Works of Righteousness
from out of the Circle of Christian Duty,
but, on the contrary, they always suppose
and take it for granted, that such Works
are duly performed. Accordingly, our
being called to the Profession of Christia-
nity, is frequently urged by the inspired
Writers, as a Motive to excite our Zeal
and Industry in the Acquisition and Prac-
tice of moral Virtue, and the Performance
of Works of Righteousness. Whereas,
did our final Salvation wholly depend —
either upon a bare speculative *Antinomian*
Faith, or any *absolute irreversibile Decrees*,
all such Exhortations to moral Virtue, and
Works of Righteousness, had been useless

§ 2.

These Texts
supposing and
including
Works of
Righteous-
ness.

Chap. VII. and impertinent ; and consequently, not put in Practice by that infinite Wisdom which can do nothing in vain.

§ 3.
And the Con-
sent of our
own Will.

Nor is the Grace and Favour of God *ever once* supposed in Scripture to save us *finally*, without our own Concurrence ; but — only to call us to the Profession of Christianity, by throwing the Means of Information in our Way ; — to supply our Weakness and Imperfection, and to give a Blessing upon *our own Endeavours* : Which it may evidently do, without clashing or interfering in the least, with the Freedom of our own Will. Or, in other Words, God's Grace saves us, indeed ; but it wisely saves us by the Intervention of *Means*. And those Means are — the virtuous Habits which that gracious Assistance enables us to attain to. For let our own unassisted Progress in Virtue and Goodness be ever so dull and slow ; be the Attainments which by meer *Nature alone* we are capable of, ever so mean and trivial ; still, if *we* do but what we can, and heartily testify our own Concurrence by imploring God's Aid, he will

will supply those *Defects* of our Nature, Chap.VII.
and *strengthen us with Might, by his Spirit*
in the inner Man; — that we, *being rooted*
and grounded in Love, — *may be filled with*
all the Fulness of God: *Ephes. iii. 16 — 19.*
Now, I would ask, what can this *rooting*
and *grounding* mean? Nothing, surely,
but our contracting virtuous and *well-rooted*
Habits of Mind, upon rational and *well-*
grounded Motives; 'till *we are filled with the*
Fulness of God; that is, I suppose, 'till we
attain to as much Happiness, as our Na-
ture shall, from Time to Time, be capa-
ble of receiving. Whereas, without the
Root or Ground-Work of such Habits, our
Nature had been incapacitated for *any*
future Happiness at all. For I apprehend
that by *Love* is here meant the whole
Complex of our Christian Duty; as it
consists in the Love of God, and our
Neighbour; and, when rightly under-
stood, in the Love of *ourselves* too, since
the two former are so essentially necessary
to make us love, or take delight in, —
our own Existence.

Chap. VII.

§ 4.

Yet God's
Grace abso-
lutely neces-
sary to Salva-
tion.

Hence, it is plain, that the Scheme here proposed, is by no Means chargeable with maintaining, that our own Works are of themselves quite sufficient to Salvation, without any Occasion to have Recourse to the Grace of God. For, no Man can be more thoroughly sensible than I am, of the Truth of this Position, — “that without the Grace of God we can do *nothing*.” In a Word, next to the Merits of the all-sufficient Sacrifice, the Doctrine of Grace is the Glory of the whole Christian System, and the noblest and most rational Encouragement that we have, to *fight the good Fight of Faith*, till we *lay hold on eternal Life*. But still, as in the *natural* World, God makes use of natural Means in the Government and Direction of it; so, in his spiritual Oeconomy, he works by Means likewise; and the *preventing* and *assisting* Grace of God, are both of them *requisite*, and both of them employed, in the inducing and aiding us to contract those virtuous Habits, and to form that heavenly Frame of Mind, that alone can fit us for a happy Immortality. His *prevent-*
ing

ing Grace clears the Mind from Prejudi- Chap. VII.
ces, makes us honest, sincere, true to
our own *real* and durable — *i. e.* to our
spiritual Interest; and, of course, desirous
to find out the Will of God, and as desi-
rous of doing his Will, when once we
shall have found it out. And after we
have found it out, his *assisting* Grace co-
operates with our Endeavours, and ena-
bles us to bring the good Work to Per-
fection: And that Work is — the work-
ing out *our own* Salvation. Therefore the
Grace of God is — the previous Induce-
ment to our laying that Foundation, on
which our future Happiness must be e-
rected. In other Words, the *preventing*
Grace of God puts us upon *projecting* the
Foundation, the *assisting* Grace of God
enables us to *lay* it: And the future Con-
tinuance of his free Grace and Favour,
crowns all, with an immortal Life of
Happiness and Glory, which is the Edi-
fice erected upon this Foundation. His
Grace cannot do *all*; because, he has
made us *free*; and must therefore certainly
treat us as such. Now, the Scripture is
plain and express, that we may do *Despite*
unto

Chap. VII. *unto the Spirit of Grace* if we will. Therefore God's Grace can only clear the Stage of Reason from all carnal and sensual Rubbish, and then aid us in our best Endeavours. Without *him* we should have no good Endeavours at all; and without the Influence of his assisting Grace, our own natural Corruption had made even our best Endeavours fruitless.

§ 5.
Sum of the
Argument.

But as I should be very sorry, either to be misunderstood, or not to give the clearest and amplest Satisfaction upon a Point of such high Importance; — the Sum of the Doctrine I would enforce, is this. A spiritual, pure, and heavenly Frame of Mind, is necessary to qualify us for the blefsful State. This Frame of Mind is what I call *virtuous Habits*. And these can be attained only by a *Series* of good Works. Again; as the moral Quality of all Actions or Works, does necessarily depend upon the Intention, View, or Motive of the Agent; it clearly follows, that no Works of ours can properly be good and acceptable to God, but such only as spring from Christian Faith; because

cause 'tis *that* only that can fully inform Chap. VII.
us of those Views and Motives that are
the fit and proper Springs of Action in
reasonable Creatures. For this is evident,
that without the Help of Revelation, Man-
kind must be left to form only *such* Ideas
of the Deity — his Attributes, — and his
Will and Pleasure, as must be built upon
the Plan of our own corrupted Nature.
And what Sort of Ideas we are capable
of forming on this Head, we may easily
judge, by casting an Eye upon *African*
or *American* Heathenism. A slight View
of which, will soon shew, how insuffi-
cient bare human Imagination has *ever*
been, to supply Mankind with just and
worthy Motives of Action. But then a-
gain ; after Christian Revelation *really has*
pointed out to us those Motives, which
are alone fit to constitute a moral Action
good and pleasing to God ; still — so weak
and frail *are we*, that without the pre-
venting and assisting Grace of God, we
cannot put those Motives in Execution.
And after we have done our best, our
Works will still be more or less imper-
fect. But then, through the Merits of
Christ,

Chap. VII. Christ, applied to ourselves by Faith, this Imperfection will be overlooked in the Sight of God, and counted *Perfection*. So that our ultimate Happiness you see, does still evidently spring from Christian Faith, — the Grace of God, — and the Merits of our Redeemer. From Christian Faith we learn the proper Motives and Springs of Action. From the Grace of God we derive Strength and Power to act. And the Defects of our Works or Actions are amply supplied by the Merits of our Saviour. And this, though it be a brief one, is yet, I hope, a *rational* as well as an orthodox Account of our Process in the great Affair of our Salvation. But to return. Whoever chooses to pursue this Subject, concerning the Durability of moral Habits, more at large, may turn to the above quoted *Rymer*, where he will find other Objections, but of less Moment, fully cleared up. There are, however, two more Objections from Scripture, against the Doctrine of “ Habits being the natural and necessary Foundations of future Happiness or Misery,” which *Rymer* takes no Notice of;

of; but which will deserve a candid Dis- Chap. VII.
cussion.

One Objection may be drawn, from that sudden and immediate Remission of Sins, which *seems* to be preach'd and promised, to all the new Converts, under the Infancy of the Gospel State; and which, of course, supposes this Remission of Sins to be previous to any real Change of old Habits into new. But, to this we reply: That these new Converts are always *supposed*, in the Question, to forsake their Sins, and to qualify themselves for Baptism, by Repentance; that is, by a Change of Mind and Inclination; and that again is — by contracting a new Sett of Habits: Or, at least, by entering upon such a new Course of Life, as, if persisted in, according to the Terms of the Baptismal Vow, will soon produce such new Habits. For that the mere *Opus Operatum*, or, the external Ceremony of Baptism, signifies but little without all this, is plain from St. *Peter*, who tells us, that Baptism does indeed save us, but how? Why, not by the *Opus Operatum*, not by
the

§ 6.
Objection
from Remis-
sion of Sins
answered.

Chap. VII. *the putting [or washing] away of the Filth of the Flesh; but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God.* The *Opus Operatum*, did, indeed, make the baptized Person a Member of the *visible* Church, but his final Salvation, or his Membership with the *invisible* Church of Christ in Heaven, depended, all this while, upon his Perseverance in the Vows and Professions he made at his Baptism: That is, in Effect, upon the virtuous Habits, or Frame of Mind, which he thereby contracted.

§ 7.
Objection
from the
Power of the
Keys answered.

It may be objected, secondly, that those Words of our Saviour in *John* xx. 23, given to all his Disciples, and in them to all their Successors, viz. that *whosoever Sins they remitted, they were remitted; and whosoever Sins they retained, they were retained*: It may be objected, I say, that here all Sins in general are subjected, as to Retention or Remission, to the absolute Power of the Church, without the least Reserve or Mention of any Change of Habits or Inclinations in the Sinner, as previously necessary to it. But here we answer, that this Popish Interpretation of
the

the Words, sets the Scriptures so monstrously at Variance with themselves, that *this* is enough to make us look out for some other Sense of them, more agreeable to the *Analogy* of Faith, the general Tenor of Revelation, and the Sense of Christian Antiquity. And such an one it will very well bear, as thus. “ Whosoever embraces your
 “ Doctrine, and truly repents, and you
 “ in my Name and by my Authority,
 “ shall pronounce his Sins to be remitted,
 “ your Sentence and Absolution shall be
 “ confirmed in Heaven. And whoever
 “ obstinately rejects your Doctrine, and
 “ persists in his Impenitence ; or lives
 “ and behaves unworthily under the Profession of it ; — that Man’s Sins shall
 “ not be forgiven him ; but whatever
 “ Censures you shall pronounce upon
 “ him, on Earth, in my Name and by
 “ my Authority, shall stand good in
 “ Heaven.” For, an absolute unlimited Authority to forgive or to retain Sins, founded on no previous Qualification of the Person, is a Notion purely Popish ; started in the dark Times of Ignorance
 and

Chap. VIII. and Imposture, and unknown to the primitive Ages: Which it could never have been, had it been the true Sense of the Words, since a Point of such high Concern must certainly have been handed down (and might have been so with Ease) by Apostolical Tradition, to the earlier Ages of the Church, and by them to us. See *Burnett* on the Articles.

C H A P. VIII.

The foregoing Principles applied to some practical and speculative Points of Christianity.

§ I.
They do due
Honour to
God's Laws.

THE Durability of moral Habits in the Soul, and their being the necessary Ground-work of future Happiness or Misery, is a Principle that seems to set the whole Scheme of Revelation in the brightest Light. For, in the first Place, it supposes both the Commands and Prohibitions of God, to spring from a far nobler Source than mere arbitrary *Will* and *Pleasure*; leaving us no room to think that they are of a Nature *merely positive,*

positive, and given us only to exercise Chap.VIII.
our Obedience, without any further End.
No; this Scheme supposes the divine
Wisdom to act *for an End*; and for a
most wise and gracious *End* indeed. For
as the Force of Habits, and the Capa-
city of enjoying rational Happiness, are,
(as I think we have already seen, and
shall see more at large hereafter) so ne-
cessarily and unavoidably connected, in
the Nature of Things, that God himself
cannot be supposed, without a manifest
Contradiction, to put them asunder; it
follows, that God, who wills our Happi-
ness *as an End* (nay, as the *only* End he
can have in bringing his Creatures into
Existence) cannot make use of wiser
Means to accomplish that End, than to
give us such a *System* of Laws, as shall
incline us to contract such Habits of
Mind as naturally lead to Happiness; and
make us hate and avoid all those that
would prove the Bane of that Happiness.
And thus, our Supposition does due Ho-
nour to God's Attributes, by converting
the rigid and severe *Task-master*, into the
kind and friendly *Monitor*: Except it de-

H

serves

Chap. VIII. serves the Name of Rigor and Severity, to forewarn the Blind of a deep Pit, into which, without such Admonition, they are just on the Brink of falling.

§ 2.
They distinguish true Religion from Superstition.

Accordingly, this noble Principle will, in all Cases, teach us to distinguish between true and genuine *Christianity*, and false and spurious Religion of every Kind. For, whatever tends to purify the Heart, — to rectify the Will, — and to exalt the whole Soul above all that is sordid, trivial, mean, or perishable, this must be rational, sound, and true Christianity. While the *Mortifications* and *Pennances* (much more the *Indulgences*) among the *Papists*, *Mahometans*, and some *Casts* or *Sects* of *Asiatic Pagans*, can answer no Sort of religious End whatever. For these (when considered, I mean, merely as Actions meritorious in themselves, and abstracted from all inward Reformation of the Heart) are but *Skin-deep* Remedies; Remedies that can never reach the internal *Gangrene* of the Soul. In short, this is the Principle that sets the Vanity and

and Folly of every Species of Superstition Chap.VIII.
in its only proper Light.

Then, *thirdly*, 'Tis the noblest Motive to a virtuous Life, by teaching us to avoid all idle Procrastinations of our Duty; and not to trust our all, to the Support of that feeble, rotten Twig, a Death-bed Sorrow. I call it a Death-bed Sorrow, presuming that a Death-bed Repentance is little less than a Contradiction in Terms; except a Man can be said to repent, without new-modeling his Inclinations and Affections. Indeed, as very great and sudden Changes have sometimes been wrought upon Mens Morals in the Time of Health; the same, no Doubt, may possibly befall *some* Men on a Sick Bed. Therefore we are not to set Bounds either to the Grace or Power of God, in the Case of *repenting* but *dying* Sinners. All I mean, is, that what I advance above, seems to be agreeable to the *ordinary* Course of Things: and that consequently 'tis almost as great a Folly and Presumption to trust to such a late Repentance, as it would be to trust to a Miracle, because

§ 3.
They promote Virtue.

Chap. VIII. — 'tis in God's Power to work one. Besides, a Man's *After-Conduct* being the only Proof of the Sincerity of his Repentance, this Proof can never be had in the Case of Death-bed Repentance: And consequently, such a Sinner must die in a State of absolute Uncertainty.

§ 4.
And the Use
of the Means
of Grace.

And *fourthly*, This is a rational Incitement to a regular and constant Use of the *Instituted* Means of Grace. Because every religious Exercise, every Species of Devotion, or mental Address to the supreme Being, has a *natural* Tendency to assimilate *our* Minds to the *divine* Mind; and thereby to make us fit Recipients of those Blessings, which God's Goodness most readily bestows upon *all* who are qualified to receive them; but which his Wisdom must oblige him to withhold from all such as are not qualified for them, because — he cannot act in vain.

§ 5.
They prevent
external Formality.

Fifthly. As there is nothing more roundly censured and condemned in Scripture, than Mens resting in the outward Forms of Religion, as in their ultimate

mate Duty ; or, in the Language of St. Paul, *having the Form of Godliness, but denying the Power thereof* ; that is, having the external Appearance of Christianity, but feeling nothing of the real and internal Efficacy of Christian Faith : so, nothing so effectually evinces the Absurdity of such a Practice, as the Principles here contended for. And the Reason is plain : For according to this Supposition, such a hypocritical Demeanour defeats the great End of Christian Revelation ; which is—to plant such virtuous Habits in the Soul, as are necessary to qualify us for future Happiness. And this is what St. Paul styles *the Power, or real Efficacy of Godliness* : While the other is no more than an airy Phantom, or empty Appearance of it.

Sixthly, If we apply these Principles to Contentment, and a quiet and ready Submission of our own Will to the Will of God ; how naturally do they promote those Duties, by placing the Rationality of them in the strongest Light. For upon this Supposition, the whole of Man's Business during this State of Probation, is,

§ 6.
They promote Contentment and Resignation.

Chap. VIII. in the Words of our Church, "so to pass
§ 6. " through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal." That is, our Improvement in virtuous Habits is our great Duty here, and the main End we ought to have in View. Of course then, all murmuring and repining at any fancied Disproportion between real Merit, and worldly Success, must evidently be most silly and ridiculous. The great Concern that is now to be principally attended to by us, is, the present Improvement of our Souls: And if that Improvement be, as usually it is, best attained to, by a Course of Trials and Afflictions, they must be chearfully submitted to, as being the Means that lead to that main End, and which best promote our future more durable and ultimate Advantage. For this is evident, that let things at present work as they will, whether in the common Language of the World, they *now* work well or ill, still, we know that in the End, "all things work together for good, to them that love God." And 'tis God alone who can tell what Share of good or bad
bad

bad Success, will best promote the spiri- Chap.VIII.
tual Improvement of each Individual, be- § 6.
cause 'tis he alone who can see into the
inmost Recesses of their Hearts; and he
alone who can tell what Effect each State
and Condition of Life, is likely to work
upon them; and he certainly deals with
each of them accordingly. All which, I
say, shews the Folly and Unreasonableness
of murmuring and complaining on Ac-
count of any fancied Disproportion be-
tween real Merit and worldly Blessings.
For let a Man's Merits (*humanly* speaking,
I mean, for *properly* speaking no Man
can merit at the Hands of God) let them
be ever so great and notorious, would you
have God reward them, by putting the
Man into such a Station, during his time
of Trial and Probation, as should be un-
fit to promote the ultimate End of his
Being? Surely no; because this would be
punishing him instead of *rewarding* him.
Therefore, I conclude, that no Sett of
Principles do tend to promote a chear-
ful and contented Resignation to God's
Will, upon so rational a Bottom, as these
we have been endeavouring to inculcate.
Therefore, *Seventhly*

Chap. VIII. *Seventhly and lastly.* This may apprize us of the Utility, or rather Necessity of a State of Probation, for Creatures of our Size and Rank in the great Scale of Beings. A State, I mean, where the *Opportunity* and *Means*, as well as the *Expediency*, of contracting good Habits, and avoiding bad ones, may plainly appear from Experience, Practice, and Fact.

§ 8. From applying the foregoing Principles concerning the Force and Durability of moral Habits, to some practical Points of Religion, let us next see what Light they may throw upon some important Points of a more speculative Nature. And first, concerning the true Nature of God's Rewards and Punishments. It must therefore certainly be an Error, to think that *all* God's Rewards and Punishments denounced in Scripture are of the Nature of positive Institutions. They are doubtless partly natural, and partly positive. I shall explain myself by a familiar Instance. A Parent offers his Child Money to make him take a Dose of Physic. The Child takes both. Here then the
Child's

§ 7.
And shew the
Use of a Pro-
bation.

§ 8.
And the true
Nature of di-
vine Retribu-
tion.

Child's Health is the *natural* Reward, and Chap.VIII.
the Money is what I call the *instituted*
Reward. Again, would I deter the same
Child from drinking Poison, — I don't
stand to give him a philosophical Solution
of the Manner *how*, and the Reason *why*,
such a Liquor will operate upon him so
and so ; no, I rather treat him as the Scrip-
tures do the Bulk of Mankind, and tell
him (what he understands far better than
he does *Philosophical Solutions*) that if he
tastes such a Liquor he shall be severely
corrected. Here, the Correction is what
I call the *positive*, and the dying by Poi-
son the *natural* Punishment ; or, more
properly, the natural Consequence of his
Disobedience. And 'tis certain, from
what has been already said, that the
greatest Part of our future Misery must
be of this latter Kind, and fitter to be sti-
led — not Punishment, but — bad Con-
sequences inevitably flowing from Sin and
Wickedness. Nor can Omnipotence it-
self, be supposed, without a Contradic-
tion, to prevent these Consequences, with-
out turning the present wise Constitution
of Things quite topsy-turvy, and rever-
sing

Chap. VIII. sing those Laws of Nature which alone can introduce rational Happiness, and of course the reverse of which *must* introduce Misery, among those who *will* thwart and rebel against those Laws. And this, as we before observed, and *this only*, can make common Sense of those earnest and pathetic Exhortations to us in Scripture, to *turn ourselves from evil Ways*: Since, as *I live, says the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked*. Expostulations these — which are addressed to *all* Sinners in general, and which are unintelligible, or rather quite ridiculous, upon any *other* Supposition; but highly necessary, rational, wise, and merciful, if we do but suppose that all Sin and Wickedness *will*, and inevitably *must* draw most miserable Consequences after it; such as must and will flow from the necessary Nature of Things,

§ 9.
The τὸ βέλ-
τιστον observ-
ed in this
Scheme.

Now, by the necessary Nature of Things, I understand that System of Government, both in the natural and the moral World, which God has ordained, once for all, as the τὸ βέλτιστον, that is, as the *best that*
can

can be upon the Whole; which, of course, Chap.VIII. can never be altered but for the worse; and which, consequently, we may depend upon it, will never be altered at all. From this System of Things it is, that Misery must of necessity, be the inevitable Consequence of Disobedience, Vice and Folly; and that by Parity of Reason, as well as by the Analogy of God's Actions, Happiness will be the natural Issue of Obedience, Virtue and Wisdom. No Doubt but that very great and inexpressible Degrees, both of Reward and Punishment, will, in either Case, be superadded hereafter, by positive Institution, for here the Scriptures are clear and express, for the Affirmative; but there is no doubt but that our good or bad Habits will be the natural Basis and Foundation upon which (as I shall explain myself presently more at large) even these positive Rewards and Punishments will be erected hereafter.

Hence, it must be a gross Mistake of the main End and Aim of Christianity, to think, as many Men seem to do, that
our

§ 10.
God's Law
not arbitrary.

Chap. VIII. our Religion is little more than “ a Syf-
“ tem of arbitrary Rules and Laws, which
“ God has given us only to exercise our
“ Obedience, so as that he may have an
“ Opportunity of rewarding such Obe-
“ dience hereafter: but that, as to the
“ Laws and Injunctions themselves, — if
“ he had given us another Sett of Direc-
“ tions it might have done as well, since
“ our Obedience had been equally re-
“ wardable.” For such Notions must of
course make Men think hardly of those
Laws that tend to curb our natural In-
clinations, and which sometimes enjoin
Things mortifying to Flesh and Blood.
But all this while nothing can be plainer
than that since an all-wise, all-perfect,
and self-sufficient Being, *can* propose no
lucrative Ends to himself; he must there-
fore certainly act, in all he does, solely
with a View to the good of his Creatures.
Of course then, the sole End of his moral
Government, and of all the Laws by
which he carries it on, can be nothing
more than to qualify us for, and induce
us to accept of — Happiness rather than
Misery: And because he knows that his
Laws,

Laws, and our habitual Obedience to Chap.VIII. them, are the only Means to lead us to that Glory and Happiness, for which he originally formed us.

All that has been just now said, is so easily and naturally Applicable to the necessary Eternity of Hell Torments, that I shall be very Brief upon that Topic. The Scriptures are most frequent, most clear, and express, as to the Affirmation of the Thing itself; and after what has been said, I hope the Reason of the Thing is equally clear. For as to that trite and stupid Objection, drawn from God's Justice, *viz.* that the Crimes committed in a short mortal Life, can never be adequate to, or justly merit, an Eternity of Misery and Woe; — there might perhaps be some room for such a Plea, were future Retribution wholly of the positive Kind, like *human* Rewards and Punishments; but upon the present Plan, the Objection amounts to no more than this; that in case any Man should capriciously and wantonly leap down a Precipice and break his Limbs; it must be
equally

§ II.
Eternity of
Hell Tor-
ments assert-
ed.

Chap.VIII. equally unjust in God, to punish that Man for Half a Minute's Folly, by making him a Cripple all the Days of his Life.

§ 12.
Divine Retri-
bution fur-
ther confi-
dered.

I have all along supposed, that *future Retribution* will be built upon such a Bottom or Foundation as we ourselves shall lay in this Life, in Habits good or bad. I do not suppose that the whole of our Reward, nor the whole of our Punishment will necessarily flow from thence by *natural Efficiency*, but only — that the additional or positive Part of our Retribution, will probably be a Sort of a Superstructure, erected upon that Foundation of Habits, which we shall here contract. For this Method of proceeding will be no more than analogous to the whole Tenor of Scripture, as well as to the ordinary Course of Providence; which usually converts a Man's Sins into his Punishment, and his good Deeds into his Reward. I will explain my Meaning more at large, by a remarkable Event in History. The Destruction of *Jerusalem* is in Scripture a well known Type of the
last

last Day; and is therefore not improbably, Chap.VIII.
a Type also of the Manner of God's Retribution at that last Day. But be that as it may, 'tis at least a fit Instance for me to explain my Meaning by. 'Tis allowed by all but the *Jews*, that this sore Calamity was a positive Punishment from Heaven upon the *Jews*, for their flagrant Infidelity in rejecting their *Messiah*: But it was at the same Time, a necessary Consequence of the very *Sin* which it was sent to punish. For they had never rebelled against the *Romans*, nor flock'd together in such Numbers into the City, nor stood so stoutly upon their Defence there, had they not been persuaded, as *Josephus* affirms, that the *Messiah* was yet to come. Therefore this Error of theirs, which was a sinful one, as proceeding from a wilful Abuse both of Scripture and common Sense, — as it was their *Sin*, so also was it their *Punishment*. While on t'other Side, the *Christian* Inhabitants of that City, who rightly took the Sense of the Scriptures, did thereby consult their own Safety by a timely Flight. So *their* Christian Faith was the Foundation of
their

Chap. VIII. *their* Reward, while the Infidelity of the *Jews* did, as naturally work out *their* Punishment. Now here was a positive Punishment, but still it was built upon a ground Work of their own laying; and a positive Reward too, but still it was erected in the same Manner. And this will serve to explain my Meaning, as to future Retribution.

§ 13.
Light thrown
on Points of
Popish Con-
troverfy.

If we proceed next to apply our System to Religious Controversy, we shall find it perhaps the only rational Standard by which we can measure the real Weight and Value of the Point in dispute; or know how to proportion our Zeal, either in Defence *of* it, or in Opposition *to* it. Let us first try *Popery* by it. Now, *Popery*, as far as it departs from sound *Christianity*, is a mere System of Priest-Craft, that easily and gently compounds with Mens Lusts and Appetites, Vices and Follies. This is therefore a Practice most to be abhorred, because it does of course defeat the main End of Christianity, which is, to qualify us for Heaven, by such moral Habits as alone can fit us for it; all which

is

Chap.VIII. “cession of Christ, and the gracious Assistance of the Holy Spirit.” But none of these Essentials of Religion can either be at first obtained, or long possessed, without the Worship of God. And as all private Worship would soon sink into Neglect, and indeed into total Oblivion, were it not cherished and kept up by public Worship, and public Instruction and Exhortation; hence, the Necessity of such public Worship and Instruction is evident and plain. And as all public Worship supposes a civil Establishment, so, does a civil Establishment of course pre-suppose, not only some established Modes of Worship, but also implies the Necessity of setting apart a certain Sett of Men, to defend, explain, and enforce the Precepts and Principles of Religion, as well as to perform the public Service of it. And if such a Body of Men *be* necessary towards the Support and Continuance of a Religion civilly established, 'tis but fit that Means should be found out, to make these Men do their Duty in a proper Manner. And this introduces the Necessity of what we call ecclesiastical Discipline

Discipline or Church Government. Now Chap. VIII. then, since both Modes of Worship, and Forms of Church Government, are no more than *subservient* to the great Ends of Religion, 'tis plain, that to disturb the Peace of the World, and to make Shipwreck of Christian Charity, either in Defence of them, or in Opposition to them, is like losing the Grain, in quarrelling about the Chaff. And this will shew us how to proportion our religious Zeal in such Cases as these, either *pro* or *con*; since a Zeal either *for* or *against* any Sett of mere Modes or Forms, is, to a Zeal in Behalf of the Realities of Religion, much in the same Proportion as the Value of the Shell is to that of the Kernel.

But then again: Since the civil Establishment of any Sect of Christians supposes *some* Modes of Worship, and *some* Forms of Discipline or other to be established; and since there will probably be always *some* Disagreement as to the Fitness and Propriety of such Modes and Forms; it must follow, that in order to compose such Differences, in the most

§ 15.
Concerning
Modes of
Worship and
Forms of Discipline,

Chap.VIII. fair and candid Manner that the Nature of the thing will admit of, we must first look for *Scripture Precept*; and next for *Scripture Example*; for there are Examples which are not Matter of Precept. After this, for Apostolical Example, if we can find it; and next after that, for the Example of the earlier Converts; because *that* is most likely to be built upon Apostolical Practice; it being but natural to think, that the Disciple will endeavour to resemble his Master. But if we find upon Search, that the Point in Dispute cannot be clearly settled, by any of these Methods, then — these two things will pretty easily follow: First, that such a Point can be of little or no Importance to Religion: And *secondly*, that let the Import of it be either small or great, the Minority, in all such Matters of an indifferent Nature, must always comply with the Majority; or else that Community can never enjoy a Moment's Peace.

§ 16.
Of Sincerity.

Let us next apply our Principles concerning the Durability and necessary Consequences of Moral Habits, to a dark and voluminous

voluminous Controversy, started some Chap.VIII. Years ago, concerning the All-sufficiency of *Sincerity*, and *the acting up to one's Conscience* in Matters of Religion. To fettle this Point properly, we must first state and fix the Meaning of the Words *Sincerity* and *Conscience*. Now, that most amiable Virtue *Sincerity*, consists in a Man's "being *that* in reality, which he " *pretends* or *seems* to be, in outward " Shew." Nor has the modern Acceptation of the Word, much deviated from the Derivation of the Name, in each of the three learned Languages. The Latin *Sincerus*, and the Greek *ἐλικρινής*, signify much the same thing. Each being a Metaphor taken from that which is pure, neat, or unadulterated by the Mixture of any heterogeneous Matter. And the Hebrew Words **תם** and **תמים** are of like Signification: Though our *English* Version generally renders those Adjectives *upright* or *perfect*; the Word *Sincerity* being but seldom used by them. Only observe, that in our *English* Translation, where these Words are rendered *Perfection*, it must mean *Perfection* as

Chap. VIII. opposed to Adulteration and Mixture: Not as opposed to Defect or Imperfection. Sincerity taken in a religious Sense, denotes then a Heart and Inclination entirely devoted to the Service of God, without any Mixture of Hypocrisy, or any Prejudice or Partiality towards worldly or carnal Things; as far forth, I mean, as they are inconsistent with such true Service due to God. A just Sense of the high Value and Importance of a Soul formed for Immortality, and now doomed to subsist for ever, and a proper Concern for the future and eternal well being of it, — all this is the rational Ground of this Devotion and Attachment to the Service of God. For, as the Soul came forth from him, to him it must return again; and it is he alone that can allot the Fate of it after Death. Hence the Necessity of behaving here in this Life, in such a Manner as shall bespeak the future Favour of him, by whose Judgment we must all stand or fall hereafter. And I cannot too often repeat it, that we may depend upon it, that an all-wise, perfect, and self-sufficient Being, can propose no Increase of Happiness

Happiness to himself, from our Service ; Chap.VIII.
and can, of course, propose no other End
to himself, than barely the Good and
Happiness of those to whom he reveals
his Will. A wise Man therefore must
always make God's Will, the Rule of his
Action : And this Principle leads us into
the true Notion of *Conscience*.

Conscience then, is “ that Operation of
“ the Mind, which compares its Actions
“ or Intentions with the Rule of Action.”
And that Rule must be the Will of God,
made known to us either by the Light
of Nature, or the Light of Revelation.
When we find that an Action has been
squared by the Rule, then we are said to
enjoy *a good Conscience* ; but when we per-
ceive that our Actions have *not* agreed
with the Rule, the Sense of such Dispa-
rity, and the Dread of its Consequences,
is what we call an *evil Conscience*. The
one is a most material Branch of Happi-
ness, the other of Misery. But when we
are doubtful and uncertain whether we
have hit upon the right *Rule* of acting,
this Doubt and Hesitation is what we call

§ 17.
Of Consci-
ence.

Chap. VIII. a *Scruple* of Conscience; and is a very troublesome State of Mind; more or less irksome, in Proportion partly to the Importance of the Action (real or imaginary Importance, I mean) but chiefly — to that Degree of Desire which we have to perform the Will of God; and *that* again will always be proportionate to the Value we set upon the future and eternal Good of our own Souls. In Cases of the greatest Importance, this Rule is generally pretty clear; it being indeed but reasonable to think, that a wise and good Being would of course proportion the Light, both of Nature and Revelation, to the Consequence and Importance of the Point to be revealed; as well as to the Strength and Abilities of those for whose Use that Light is given. We may therefore pretty safely depend upon it, that where the Rule of Action is not plainly discernable, there — the Action is of no great Importance.

§ 18. And now, having defined and settled the true Notion of *Sincerity* and *Conscience*, let us see, how far 'tis possible, in the Nature of Things, for Sincerity *alone* to

Bare Sincerity not sufficient for Salvation.

to work such Wonders towards a Man's Chap.VIII.
 Salvation, or his final Happiness here-
 after, as has been contended for by some.
 The true State of the Case seems to be
 this. A compleat and absolute Submis-
 sion to the Will of God revealed in Scrip-
 ture, is necessary to the Attainment of
 God's Favour; or, in other Words, ne-
 cessary to conduct us to Happiness here-
 after. This is on all Hands allowed;
 and it must also be allowed, that the
 very *inditing* of the Scripture, implies this
 tacit Proposition, "that without the Light
 " of it, we neither *could* or *should* have
 " arrived at that compleat and final Hap-
 " piness, which our human Nature is
 " capable of being blessed with." For
 otherwise, had the mere Light of Nature,
 though joined to the greatest Degree of
 Sincerity, been sufficient for that End,
 then, the superadding of Revelation to
 it, had been useless; and consequently,
 instead of Wisdom and Goodness, it had
 been downright Folly and Impertinence:
 Of which no wise *Man*, much less the
 Author of all Wisdom, would be found
 guilty. Well then, our future Happi-
 ness

Chap. VIII. nefs must result from a compleat and perfect Compliance with God's Will, as it stands revealed in Scripture. If so, either God Almighty must miraculously reverse all the Laws of Nature, and strike the whole System of his *moral* as well as *natural* Government of the World, into a Mass of Confusion, and actually turn Sense into Nonsense, by confounding all Relation between Means and Ends, Causes and Effects; if besides Sincerity (which I allow to be a main one) some other Qualifications be not also necessary to a compleat and perfect Compliance with God's Will here, and consequently to the Attainment of the ultimate Happiness and Perfection of our Nature hereafter. *Viz.* First, Opportunity. Secondly, Sincerity. Thirdly, Common Sense and Understanding. Fourthly, Industry. And I place them designedly in this Order. For,

Other Requi-
sites.

§ 19.
1st. Oppor-
tunity.

First, If God's Providence does not throw the Means of Information into a Man's Way, it must follow, that the most unfeigned Sincerity, added to the greatest Acuteness of Understanding, and both

both these joined to the most laudable Industry in searching; 'tis plain, I say, that these three alone, can never discover the true Way to Happiness, if Christianity be that Way (as it is supposed in this Dispute) because Christianity consists of a certain Number of Facts, and Consequences drawn from those Facts, which no Man can come to the Knowledge of, without positive Information, any more than a Man can get acquainted with the *Roman* History, without the Help of a *Roman* Historian. This was the Case of *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Tully*, and many more sincere, sensible, and inquisitive Heathens. Again,

Secondly, If the Man really has both Opportunity of Information, good Sense and Industry, but, — no Sincerity; that is, no *true* Regard for the future Good of his own Soul, nor any real desire, either to discover the Will of God, or to practice it when discovered; — why then, his Opportunity will be lost; and his natural good Sense and Industry will be employed — not to find out God's Will, but — to pick Holes, and to *discover* or *make* Flaws

§ 20.
adly. Sincerity.

Chap.VIII. Flaws in the divine Authority of that Scripture in which it is contained. 'Tis to be feared that this is the Case of too many of the Ringleaders of modern *Deism*.

§ 21.
3dly. Common Sense.

Thirdly, If a Man has both Opportunity, Sincerity, and Industry, but wants a competent Share of natural Sense, he will then be, more or less, in the Case of an *Idiot*; and will be no proper Subject for any Revelation to be addressed to, as is most evident. Thanks to the Author of our Nature, that *this* is a Case that rarely happens.

§ 22.
4thly. Industry.

Fourthly, Though a Man be possessed of Opportunity, Sincerity, and common Sense, but wants Industry to apply them all *to use*; then, these other Qualities must, of Course, all remain *useless to him*. This, indeed, is a Case that possibly *may* happen, but it can happen but *rarely*; because true Sincerity will, in this Case, always be a natural Spur to a Man's Industry.

Therefore

Therefore we may safely conclude, that Chap.VIII.
beside Sincerity of Heart, proper Infor- § 23.
mation, and a careful and industrious Use Conclusion.
of it, must be necessary to mould the
Soul into that Frame that is previously
necessary to, and alone can fit us for —
true Happiness, both here and hereafter.
For as the sincerest Man alive may mis-
take his Road, and fall down a Precipice,
for want of proper Information, or pro-
per Care to observe it; so the Case is
much the same in Religion. No Man's
bare Sincerity can save him from the na-
tural Consequences of Ignorance and Er-
ror, any more than it can preserve his
Body from the natural Consequences of
a Fall. And what baneful Effects have,
in all Ages, flowed from Ignorance and
Error in religious Matters (though those
Errors have been all the while accompa-
nied by the most real and unfeigned *Sin-*
cerity) a slight View of the History of
Mankind will readily evince. These E-
vils may be ranked under the two Heads
of *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*: Two of
the principal Sources of almost every Spe-
cies of Evil, both *civil*, *phisical*, and
moral,

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of *Superstition* and *Enthusiasm*: Two of
the principal Sources of almost every Spe-
cies of Evil, both *civil*, *phisical*, and
moral,

Chap.VIII.

§ 23.

Conclusion.

Chap. VIII. moral, that Mankind can feel. From these two, a Man's Sincerity is so far from being able to secure him, that it is a necessary Ingredient in *both* of them; so essentially necessary, that take Sincerity from them, and *both* will loose their very *Being* and *Existence*; and become what we call either downright *Knavery* and *Imposture*, or Folly. But to return,

§ 24.
These some-
times wanted
only in Part.

I have here supposed Cases, in which one or more of these four Requisites are *totally* wanting. But this is not always the Case; for sometimes they are wanting only *in Part*. For Instance. A Man, though born in a Christian Country, may be so circumstanced, that he can't read at all; or he may have but little, or perhaps no Time to read, suppose him ever so able or willing to read. This must of course, abate much of that Concern, which he might otherwise have had for the future Good of his own Soul, as well as much of that honest desire both of *knowing* and *doing* the Will of God, which we stile *Sincerity*. And again, though a Man may have a great Share both of natural

tural Sense and Industry, yet the Cares Chap.VIII. and Concerns about the temporal Goods of this Life, which, in our present State of Probation, will too often, be more pressingly urgent, than any speculative Concern about the future State of the Soul; these, I say, both *may* and *do* incline many, to divert both their good Sense and Industry, *so wholly*, or at least *so much* to the Concerns of *this* Life, that with regard to Religion, they shall be, to all Intents and Purposes, much in the Case both of Idiots and Sluggards.

Now, this is pretty much the Case of the Bulk of Mankind, even in all civilized Christian Countries. And this is the very thing that shews us the Necessity of an established Religion, and a standing Priesthood. That there may be a Sett of Men whose Lives shall be wholly dedicated to the necessary Work — of throwing Opportunities of Christian Knowledge into the Way of those who don't look for them; — of apprizing giddy thoughtless Mortals, of the real Value and high Concern of their own Souls;

§ 25.
Hence the
Necessity of
a standing
Priesthood.

Chap.VIII. Souls ; and consequently, of the Fitness and Necessity of a sincere Desire both of *knowing* and *doing* the Will of God ; — of inducing Men to make a proper Use of their natural Understanding in religious Matters ; as well as aiding and assisting them in the Use of it, by shewing them how to draw forth its latent Powers ; and by that Means compensating, in some Measure, for that want of a learned Education, by which alone the human Understanding is to be brought to its full Perfection and Extent. For as the Time and Industry of the Bulk of Mankind, must of Necessity, as we observed before, be turned chiefly towards the Concerns of temporal Life, and of course be taken off from Books and Speculation ; therefore, the Labour and Study of the Priesthood, should by them be stored up, like Honey by the Bee, to be produced for the Use of the People, on such Occasions as may become necessary, in the Course of their Ministry. So much for the Force of Habits.

But

But here, let me apprise my Reader Chap.VIII.
 once for all, that when I call the Force § 26.
 of Habits the *natural* Foundations of fu- God's Power
 ture Happiness or Misery, I am far from and Goodness
 setting Bounds to that infinite Wisdom, not limited
 Goodness, and Power of God, which is hereby.
 able to annex *any* Effect to *any* Cause.
 All that I contend for, is, that *this* seems
 to be the ordinary Course of Providence,
as far as we are acquainted with it. But,
 how far the Almighty may, upon wise
 and just and proper Motives, and upon fit
 Occasions unknown *to us*, — be pleased to
 controul or to suspend, this his ordinary
 Course, or usual Manner of acting, to
 serve some great and wise Purposes,
 which are, at present, above the Sphere
 of our Comprehension ; — this is what no
 Man can be qualified to pronounce. The
invisible World, or the World of Spirits,
 may be governed by Laws that may have
 their miraculous Interpositions, as well as
 the Laws of the natural or material
 World have. And therefore, 'tis no
 more an Offence against God's Omnipot-
 ence to say that such and such seems to
 be the ordinary Course of his Providence,

Chap. VIII. in the invifible World of Spirits ; than it implies a Denial of his Power of working Miracles, to fay, that fuch or fuch are the general Laws of the vifible Creation.

§ 27.
— Nor the
Merits of
Chrift under-
valued.

Nor is there any thing in this Scheme, inconfiftent with that great and fundamental Article of the Chriftian Faith, concerning thofe all-fufficient Merits of our Saviour, through which we hope for Salvation hereafter. For, what has been faid before (Chap. VII. § 4.) concerning the natural Efficacy of divine Grace, towards a Man's Salvation ; the fame holds good, even with Regard to the Merits of our Saviour: That *they* alfo work by Means. For, tho' it be a moft undoubted, as well as a moft comfortable and important Doctrine (being, indeed, the very Corner-Stone of our Faith) that our Lord's Death upon the Crofs, was " a full
" perfect, and fufficient Sacrifice, Obla-
" tion, and Satisfaction, for the Sins of
" the whole World," yet, 'tis certain, that if *we* to whom the Gospel is tendered and propounded, do not lay hold on thefe all-fufficient Merits *by Faith*, thofe
Merits

Merits will be nothing *to us* but an Enhancement of our Guilt *here*, and of our Punishment *hereafter*. And when I say that we must lay hold on our Saviour's Merits, and avail ourselves of them *by Faith*, I don't mean an empty, barren, speculative, *Antinomian* Faith, but, Faith in the true Gospel Sense of the Word, as it comprehends "the whole Round of our Christian Duty: Not only the Assent of the Mind to the Truth of the *Doctrines*, but also a sincere, cordial, and practical Obedience to the *Commands* of the Gospel." And now, let us observe *the Means* by which the Merits of Christ aid us in the working out of our own Salvation.

In order to this, we must consider Man, as in his native Original State, untaught by Revelation, and left wholly to the Strength of his own unassisted Reason, to find out the Nature and Attributes, and thereby—the Will of his Creator; that he may make himself happy by the Practice of it. We will suppose him to be so good a Proficient in this *self-taught*

§ 28.

— But enhanced thereby.

Chap.VIII. *Philosophy*, as happily to escape the Blunders and Absurdities of Heathen *Polytheism*, and to arrive safely at the Unity of the Godhead; and those Attributes of the divine Nature, which any serious, sensible, and contemplative Mind may collect from a bare View of the Works of the visible Creation: Such as God's Mercy, Goodness, and Benignity to his Creatures, as well as the Justice and Purity of the divine Nature; and consequently — his Hatred and Abhorrence of every thing opposite to all these. He then reflects upon his own wicked, sinful and impure Actions and Inclinations: And then, what a Mass of Confusion must all the natural Attributes of the Deity appear to him? What Comfort or Assistance can he draw from them, either to settle the Peace and Quiet of his own Mind, upon any rational satisfactory Bottom, or to amend his own wretched State and Disposition? His Reflections upon the Purity and Justice of the divine Nature, must fill him with the utmost Dread and Horror; and make him regard his Creator as an enraged Enemy, and a severe Avenger. For what Grounds
could

could he have from the Light of Nature, Chap.VIII.
to imagin, that God's Justice could suffer § 28.
him to pardon past Sins, even *upon* Re-
pentance? Sure, the Light of Nature
cannot inculcate *opposite* Doctrines. And
yet, 'tis as easy to suppose that natural In-
stinct shall give a Man both a *Sympathy*
and an *Antipathy* to one and the same Ob-
ject, at one and the same Time; as 'tis to
imagin, that natural Light can discover
two such Opposites as Justice and Pardon
too. If therefore our *self-taught Philoso-*
pher would take Refuge in God's Mercy
and Benignity; it must be, at the Ex-
pence of his Justice: And then, he must
look upon his God as an indolent *Epicu-*
rean Deity, to whom the good or bad
Actions of his *Reasonable* and *Accountable*
Creatures, are Matters of the utmost In-
difference. And the next immediate Step
must be, to abandon himself wholly to
the Dictates of his own corrupted Nature,
totally giving himself up to every vile
Practice, that can well debase the high
born Soul of Man, into that of a Beast
or a Devil.

Chap. VIII.

§ 29.
— And God's
Attributes re-
conciled.

But how easily is this Confusion set to Rights, and how suddenly is this Storm of jarring Elements all converted into Calm and Sunshine, by taking in the proffered Aid of true Christian Orthodox Revelation? The Sufferings of an incarnate God, at once fully satisfy the Justice of the divine Nature, — shew his Hatred and Detestation of Sin, — and at the same time are a far more glorious Display of God's Benignity, Love, and Mercy to his Creatures, than can possibly be deduced from *any* or *all* of the Works of the visible Creation. Now, *this* leaves the Soul of Man, though never so torn with a Sense of Sin and Guilt, wholly at Rest, upon most just and rational Considerations. And thus, the Man is left at Liberty, to exalt and dignify his own rational Nature, by every Motive, that can be drawn from the Contemplation of every Attribute of God (all now fairly reconciled to each other) as well as from the *habitual Practice* of every righteous, just, and wise Command of God. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the Sons of God. And have not received the*

the Spirit of Bondage again to fear; but Chap.VIII.
have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby
 they do, with that Boldness, as well as
 filial Affection, which becomes God's
 Children, *cry, Abba*, that is — Father.
 So far is this noble and truly Christian
 Doctrine of the Merits of our Redeemer,
 from being inconsistent with what we
 maintain concerning the Durability, Force
 and Efficacy of Moral Habits, that the
 one is an Illustration and Confirmation
 of the other.*

To conclude therefore: I hope that
 what has been advanced concerning the
 Nature, Origin, Use, and Necessity of
 Moral Habits, in free reasonable Crea-
 tures, has proved a Clue that has safely
 led us through the several religious La-
 byrinths we have ventured to apply it to.
 I confess, that to myself, it makes the
 whole Scheme of Revelation, one entire,
 rational and consistent Thing; *in seipso totus,*
teres atque rotundus; and rids it of almost
 every Difficulty that attends the Dispen-
 K 4 fation:

§ 30.
Conclusion.

* See this Reasoning amply confirmed by St.
Paul, in 2 Cor. ch. v. v. 14, to the End of the ch.

Chap.VIII. fation : More particularly, as I hope we shall soon see, of that grand Difficulty and main stumbling Block of all, *the literal* Doctrine of Original Sin. And if it proves to be a Key that so readily opens many a hamper'd Lock ; if it proves to be a Balance, that so commodiously and truly gives us the Weight and Value of almost all that we can well contend for in our religious Disputes ; if it proves a true Touchstone, that at once shews the Difference between sound Religion and spurious Pretences to it, and, like the Touch of *Ithuriel's* Spear, makes both Popery, and every other Species of Priestcraft and Superstition, immediately start up to view in its true and proper Form, — while it proves a Spur to every religious Duty ; — a Principle, I say, that will do all *this*, must bid fair for being right, and just, and founded upon Truth : At least, if it should even prove to be an Error, it must be the least dangerous, and the most harmless and innocent Mistake, that ever any Man stumbled upon. And thus have I spent no less than three Chapters in discussing the Nature of Moral

ral

ral Habits in free reasonable Creatures ; a Chap.VIII.
Point that appears to me of the highest
Importance to the Cause of Christianity ;
and one that is indeed, the main Founda-
tion of the *Rationale* advanced in
these Papers. I was therefore under an
absolute Necessity of examining it at
large, both in itself and in its Conse-
quences. But I now return from this
Digression, if it can with Justice be called
a Digression ; and proceed to one of those
general Conclusions, which I would have
the Reader consider as so many Resting-
Places in the Course of this long, but —
one continued Argument. But first give
me leave to recapitulate a little, the bet-
ter to preserve the Thread of the Dis-
course.

We have now seen “ that there is suf-
“ ficient Reason why God should permit
“ the Existence of any Kind of moral
“ Evil in the System of the Universe.” —
“ We have seen that it is both wise and
“ just in him, to create even such Free
“ Moral Agents, as he knew before hand
“ would abuse the Freedom of their
“ Will,

§ 31.
Recapitula-
tion.

Chap. VIII. " Will, and pervert the general End of
" their Creation." — upon applying these
Principles to the Fall of *Satan*, and his
Accomplices, we have seen that " there
" is nothing in the Scripture Account of
" their Fall, that is at all contrary to our
" Reason ;" — but that " a probable So-
" lution may be given, from the natural
" and unavoidable Force of Habits, even
" of their incurable Enmity to God and
" Goodness." Therefore, the general
Conclusion I would draw from all this,
is, — " that it is not more agreeable to
" plain Scripture, than consonant to com-
" mon Sense and sound Reason, to sup-
" pose the *Mosaic* Account of the Fall of
" *Adam*, and the subsequent Corruption
" of our human Nature, to be a strict
" literal Truth ; an *historical* Fact, as li-
" terally true as that of the *Flood*, or any
" other Fact recorded by *Moses*." So that
I hope I have now cleared the Way to the
next general Enquiry, previously necessary
to be made, before we can so conveni-
ently come to the grand Point. And
that is, to consider the true Nature of
that

that State, into which Mankind, at the Chap. IX.
Instigation of the Devil, was suffered to
fall, through the Sin of *Adam*.

C H A P. IX.

Of the State of Man after the Fall.

IN the handling of this Enquiry I propose to be very brief. I ought, indeed, properly, to take the following Method. First to enquire into the true Nature of that State which *Adam* enjoyed before the Fall. Secondly, to speak something concerning the natural Connection between the immediate *Cause* and the *Effect*, in the Case of *Adam's* Transgression. And, after that, to shew the true Nature of that State, into which Mankind was suffered to fall, through the Sin of *Adam*. The first of these I wave for two Reasons: First, because it seems an impossible Task (or at least a Task too hard for *me*) considering the present State of Corruption we are in, to attain to any just or adequate Conception

§ 1.
Scheme here
proposed.

Chap. IX. tion of the State of *Adam* before he fell. Only so far *negatively* do we know, that he was guilty neither of Sin, nor sinful Inclination ; and again, — so far *positively*, that he was under the immediate Guidance of — and was blest with — such an intimate Communion with the holy Spirit of God, as *we*, for the present, can, I presume, have little or no Conception of. The other Reason why I chuse to drop all further Enquiry of this Sort, is, because the Reader may reap as ample Satisfaction as can well be given upon this Head, from that excellent Philosopher and Divine, already referred to ; I mean Archbishop *King*, in his Sermon on the *Fall of Man*.

§ 2.
Physical Effects of the
forbidden
Fruit inscrutable.

As to the second Point, I mean the Connection between the immediate *Cause* and the *Effect* of *Adam's* Transgression ; — or, in other Words, to make it out, upon *physical* Principles, *how* the Juice of any particular Fruit, should either inspire a Man with Knowledge, or have such a durable and pernicious Effect upon all his Posterity ? — Here I answer with Archbishop

bishop *King*, that those Effects were truly and properly of a *Sacramental Nature*. That is, as God in both his Sacraments, does annex his invisible Grace, to the visible or material Elements, though there is no *necessary* Connection between them in the Nature of Things, as far as *we* can see into them; so, he who is the sole Author of all natural *Causes* and *Effects* too, thought proper to annex such and such Effects, to the Juice of that Fruit which *Adam* tasted, in Opposition to God's Command. For the most that we know of Causes and Effects in Regard to many thousands of natural *Phænomena*, comes to no more than this; that a *Cause* is something that goes before an *Effect*; and an *Effect* is something that follows a *Cause*. But, as to any essentially necessary Connection between *Cause* and *Effect*, there are thousands of *Phænomena* daily before our Eyes, that puzzle us every Jot as much as the *Physical Effects* of *Adam's* tasting the forbidden Fruit.

But this no
Objection.

But, as to the *third* Branch of this Inquiry, I mean the true Nature of that State,

§ 3.

The Fall introductory of a State of Probation.

Chap. IX. State, into which both *Adam*, and the whole Human Race, were suffered to fall through his Transgression; *that* may be spoken to with greater Precision. Upon Examination, we shall find this to be, truly and properly, *a State of Probation*; or “a State in which, through that Corruption of our Nature, which was originally derived to us from *Adam*, we shall be continually prone to many and various Sins; and at the same Time under a Necessity of practically and experimentally feeling the dreadful but natural Effects of such sinful Practices.” For the Consequences entailed by the divine Decree, upon the Sin of *Adam*, were principally these two: Or at least these two are what I am principally concerned to handle, *viz.* *First*, a sinful Corruption or Depravity of the Will. And, *Secondly*, Death and Diseases. The latter is undeniable; and as to the Depravity and Corruption of the Will, though *this* has indeed been denied by some *Heretics*, still it has always been the Sense of Christian Antiquity, and indeed — of the Church in *all Ages*. Accordingly this important Truth

is

is absolutely the Foundation of all those Chap. IX.
Passages of Scripture, in which the Ne- § 3.
cessity of *Regeneration* or the *New Birth*
is inculcated. As to their Expulsion from
Paradise and the Curse that was de-
nounced upon the Earth; both these seem
properly to come under that Part of the
Sentence that doomed them to Death.
For the Curse upon the Earth was, in
Effect, nothing more than such a Change
wrought in the Elements, as should oblige
Mankind to submit to hard Labour; and
subject us to those bodily Pains and Dis-
eases, which are now the natural and or-
dinary Fore-runners of Death. Not that
'tis absolutely clear *to me*, either that any
real Change was, at that Time, actually
made in the Nature of the Elements, or
at all necessary to be made: Because their
Expulsion from out of the Garden of *Eden*,
into a rude uncultivated Country, might
possibly answer the same Intent as well.
But be that as it will, this Change in the
Constitution of the Elements, if any such
was made, had been to small Purpose,
had not Man been turned out of *Paradise*,
and debarred Access to the Tree of Life:
For

Chap. IX. For otherwise, the Use of that Tree would, from Time to Time, have foiled all our Diseases, and swallowed up Death in Immortality.

§ 4.
— And how.

So that upon the Whole, the Consequence of *Adam's Sin*, was, our falling into a State of moral Corruption or Depravity: A State, in which we are inclined to commit many Sins, but are always under a Necessity of severely feeling the many Pains and Evils, both natural and moral, that are by God's Decree, and the present wise Constitution of Things, thus closely annexed to this sinful and corrupted State. Such are all the Calamities we feel from the *Baseness* and *Wickedness* of one another; and from the *Pangs* of our own *Consciences*; and such are the natural Evils we suffer from bodily *Pains* and *Labour*; from *Hunger* and *Thirst*; from *Heat* and *Cold* and *Nakedness*; and from all the Evils proceeding from the *Inclinations* of the Elements; and from that Dread and Horror with which we look upon those Pains of Death we must all undergo, and of which we are thus hourly reminded

reminded, by such a Number and Variety, both of *Accidents* to ourselves, and *Examples* in the Persons of others. But still; however irksome and disagreeable these things may be to us *at present*, I hope to make it appear, that they are little more than so much *Preventive Physic*. Corruptions of our first Estate they are, no doubt; but they are only a Kind of Corruption *innoculated* into our Nature *for a Time*; to prevent a more dreadful and durable *Catastrophe* hereafter. For we shall presently see, that it serves the noblest, wisest, and at length the most merciful Ends of Providence, to place us in this State *for a Season*; because it must naturally tend to enhance and firmly instate us in — the everlasting Enjoyment of that true *Rational Happiness* for which alone we are ultimately intended. But this makes it necessary for us, in the next Place, to establish right and just Notions of the Nature of *Rational Happiness*; for we shall never be able to judge of the Fitness and Propriety of the Means, if we have not right Notions of the *End* aimed at by those Means.

C H A P. X.

The true Nature of Rational Happiness.

§ 1.
Happiness
defined.

I Define *Happiness* in general, to be
“ *that Satisfaction, Pleasure, or Con-*
“ *tentment, which, by God's wise Appoint-*
“ *ment, results from THE RIGHT Use*
“ *and Application of our natural Faculties.*”

And the Degree or Quantity of Happiness in every Creature, must be in Proportion to that Sum total which arises from the Number and Excellence of its natural Faculties, multiplied into each other; and *that* Sum again multiplied by the Opportunities which the Creature may have, of exerting or making use of them.

Happiness of
two Sorts,
Sensual and
Rational.

Hence, *Sensual Happiness* consists in the Gratification of the Senses, and must be estimated as before: That is, in Creatures of different Kinds, it is proportionate to the Number and Acuteness of their Senses, multiplied into the Opportunities they have of gratifying them. On the other Hand, — *Rational Happiness* arises from the due Use and Exercise of the Rational or Intellectual Faculties: And the
different

different Degrees of it, in reasonable Beings of different Ranks and Orders in the *Scale of Nature*, must be estimated in the same Manner. Only, we must take Care to remember, that Happiness of this latter Species, must, in the Nature of Things, be of a worthier, nobler, and sublimer Kind; because it approaches nearer to the Throne of God, who is far removed from all *Matter* and *Sensuality*. And therefore these two, when weighed together, will admit of no Comparison in Point of specific Value, as is most evident.

Chap. X.

But we must beware of confounding *Happiness* with *Contentment*; as the Vulgar are apt to do, when they maintain, that all who are equally *Contented*, are therefore equally *Happy*. For if A be possessed of three times the Inlets or Means of Happiness that B is; here, though each may be fully *contented* with what he has (that is, though neither of them may desire any Addition) still, A will enjoy three times the Happiness that B possibly *can* enjoy. Both may be equally contented, but surely, — one has more to be contented with than the

§ 2.

Happiness
how different
from Con-
tentment.

L 2

other.

Chap. X. other. For in the Affair of Happiness, these two will resemble Vessels of unequal Sizes and Contents. Both may alike be filled up to the Brim; but it does not follow, that because both are equally full, therefore both must hold an equal Quantity. 'Tis very true, that the greatest Degrees of Happiness may be annihilated by Discontent and Repining; but why? Why surely, because such a Turn of Mind, hinders a Man from rightly *using* and *applying* the Means of Happiness that God has given him. This Distinction between *Happiness* and *Contentment* is a Point of no small Consequence. The Want of it may clip the Wings of that noble, generous, and laudable Ambition, which ought to be, for ever, spurring us on, to greater and greater Degrees of Perfection, — to still higher and higher Attainments, both in Virtue, Grace, and Knowledge. But to return.

§ 3.
Rational
Happiness
requires Re-
flection and
Judgment.

Nothing can be plainer, than that no Creature can enjoy Rational Happiness, that is not capable of *Reflecting* and *Judging*. For these are the proper Acts of a reason-
able

able Being ; and indeed so essential to the Nature of such a Being, that *Rationality* properly consists in the habitual Use and Exercise of those Faculties. But, neither Reflection nor Judgment can be exerted, without a free and unconstrained Power of *examining, marshalling, and comparing* our *Ideas*, as they present themselves to the Mind ; and of *Beginning and Ending* our own *Thoughts*, as we please. For otherwise, if we are swayed by any thing *Extrinsic* to the *Free* Operations of our own Minds, the Conclusion we come to, will not be properly *our own* ; it will be the Effect of some Cause — extrinsic *to us* ; and, of course, such Conclusion will, in Effect, be no Act of *our own* ; nor will it be the Result of any *Use* or *Application* of *our own Faculties* ; and therefore, it can be no Source of Rational Happiness *to us*, because — not derived from any Act of our own Rational Powers. And being derived from no Act of our own rational Powers, it can afford us none of that *Self-Approbation* which is so very great and material a Branch of Rational Happiness. Besides, as *we* are here supposed to be

Chap. X. quite *Passive* in the Case, we should be liable to render no Account of any such Conclusion, nor of any Act or Deed performed in Consequence of it: A Supposition which would strike the whole Mass, both of *Natural* and *Revealed* Religion, into a Heap of Nonsense and Contradiction at one Blow; were this the ordinary Course of Things. Therefore, it evidently follows, that an absolute *Freedom of Will*, is indispensably requisite, to make us capable of *rational* Happiness, since it is so essentially necessary to make us *rational* and *accountable* Beings.

§ 4.
Hence our
Delight in
Free Choice.

Therefore, since *Freedom of Will* is the very *Basis* of all Rational Happiness, and that indeed which makes our Nature approach the nearest to that divine *Image* or *Resemblance*, in which it was at first created; 'tis no Wonder, that we all of us take such Delight in the Exercise of our Freedom; and to that Degree too, as to be naturally pleased with our own free Choice, and that too — very often, merely because *it is our own*. And indeed, as Happiness in general results from the proper Exercise

cise of our Natural Faculties, no Wonder Chap. X.
so great a Share of our Happiness should
arise from the Exercise of our *Freedom*;
that noblest of all our Faculties.

But then, this highest, this noblest, most
Godlike, and most Important of all our
Faculties, is, *of Course*, attended with these
two necessary and inseparable Consequen-
ces. *First*, that it must always be in *our*
own Power, if *we* please, to abuse and
misapply our natural Talents: That is, it
must always be in our *own* Power to sin
against God; and of Course to make our-
selves miserable, if *we* think fit. And
secondly, that God himself, as we have
had Occasion to observe before, can use
none but *Rational* Motives, or such as are
fit to *incline* or *persuade* us to chuse *Hap-
piness* rather than *Misery*. For, were he
to use *Compulsion*, *that* would be turning
us into Machines, which are incapable of
Rational Happiness; consequently, that
would not only be absurdly undoing the
Work of *his own Hands*, but also disquali-
fying us from attaining the main End for
which he brought us into Existence;

§ 5.
But it may be
abused.

Chap. X. which was — the Enjoyment of Rational Happiness: To qualify us for which, an entire Freedom of Will has been shewn to be so *essentially* necessary.

§ 6.
Hence Force
of Example,
Prejudice of
Education,
and Love of
natale solum
accounted
for.

From what has been above said, about the Nature, Origin, and Force of Habits, and the *true* Nature of sensual and rational Happiness; some Solution may perhaps be drawn, of those three remarkable Affections, and Springs of human Action (all three of them pretty nearly related to each other) I mean, — the Force of Example, — the Prejudice of Education — and that strong Affection, which all Men have been so often, and so long ago, observed to bear towards their native Soil. I mean the very Soil and Country itself, considered abstractedly from the Inhabitants of it. As to Force of Example, and Prejudice of Education, something will be said below, upon these Points, in the *Conclusion*. I shall therefore content myself here, with examining into the Origin of that Affection, which all Men (even the greatest *Savages*, as well as the *politest* Nations) do

do more or less bear, towards their native Soil : And which few, perhaps, can be fully sensible of, who never travelled much Abroad. The Case is this. As Happiness, in general, results from the Use and Application of our natural Talents and Abilities, we must of Course be pleased with those Objects, on which our Talents and Abilities are exercised. And as the Scene of a Man's Birth and *early* Education, is what of Course presents him with those Objects, upon which his natural Powers are **FIRST** exercised and employed ; — therefore, from those first Impressions of Delight, and that habitual Pleasure which we reap from them, jointly considered with the growing Force of Habits (already accounted for) we imperceptably form, such Connections of Ideas, as unavoidably produce that Affection which a Man always retains for his native Soil, or the Scene of his Birth and *early* Education. For *that* Scene *first* supplied him with those Objects, upon which those natural Powers of his were first exercised ; from the Exercise of which, all his Sense and Perception, both of
 sensual

Chap. X. sensual and rational Happiness, were first derived : And a Scene too, that is generally free from those Cares and Anxieties that are so much apt to lower Men's Happiness in their more advanced Years. And this will naturally lead us on, to a Solution of that very odd, but very just and true Observation, — that of all the People of *Europe*, none are so remarkable fond of their own native Soil, as the *Dutch* and the *Swiss*. And yet, those People inhabit two Countries, where the natural Scenery is the most diametrically opposite, of any two Countries on the Face of the Earth. But, that very Difference, is itself the Cause of the *Phænonomenon*. For whereas a Native of any other Country in *Europe*, but *Holland* and *Switzerland*, may every where meet with something resembling the natural Face of his own Country ; on the other Hand, — the *Hollander*, who inhabits a vast morassy Plain, finely cultivated and improved, can no where meet with its like : No more than the *Swiss* can, whose Country is the very Reverse of *Holland*, as well as widely different, in Respect to
the

the Face of Nature, from any other Chap. X.
Country in *Europe*, or perhaps in the
World. And hence, I think, it is (though
now without the *nescio quâ*) that *natale*
solum dulcedine tangit, humanos animos. So
much for this seeming Digression; and
so much for those Principles which seem-
ed necessary to be established, in order to
open a clearer Passage to the main Point.
Let us therefore once more stop and look
back a little.

First then, we have seen that the
Scheme of the Redemption of Mankind,
was not *occasioned* by the unexpected Suc-
cess of *Satan* over our first Parents in Pa-
radise; but that his Success was *foreseen*
and *permitted* to happen, as the most
commodious Instrument for God's Wis-
dom and Goodness to work with. It was
no unforeseen Breach, made cunningly
and sily by the Devil; but the intended
Ground-work and Foundation of that
Kingdom of Happiness and Glory, which
was prepared for us before the Creation
of the World; and into which, the *Faith*
and *Practice* of *Christianity* was foreseen
to

§ 7.
Recapitulati-
on. The
Fall design-
ed.

Chap. X. to be the wisest Means to introduce us. And I shall shew presently, that this was the most effectual Way that *we* can conceive, to make the Possession of that Kingdom as durable as the Nature of those immortal Spirits, for whose Use it was intended.

§ 8.
Permission of
Moral Evil.

In the second Place, we have seen the *Fitness* and *Propriety* of God's working by the Means he did. We have seen (what indeed is very shocking to our Reason, at first Sight) that it is most *wise* and *just* in God to permit the Existence of *Moral Evil*; nay, even of the most inveterately wicked *Moral Agents*; there being certain *Cases*, and certain *Times*, in which such wilful Depravity and Corruption, are no more than *Necessary* Instruments in the Hands of him who can, with so much Ease, extract the greatest Good, from out of the greatest Evil. And who, in the governing of Moral Agents, has frequent Occasion for that *particular Species* of Good, that can be drawn from out of Moral Evil *only*.

We

We then proceeded to apply these Principles to the Case of the *Fallen Angels*; and have found, that all that is recorded in Scripture, concerning their strange Revolt, and incurable Madness, is very agreeable to Reason and Common Sense; and of course, that there is nothing in the *Literal Account* of the Fall of *Adam*, but what is very consonant to our Reason too.

Chap. X.

§ 9.

Fall of Satan.

This led us to take a cursory View, of the Nature of that State into which God suffered Mankind to fall, at the Instigation of the Devil. And this appears to be nothing more, upon the Upshot, than such a Probationary State, as must be of the utmost Use to Creatures of our Size and Rank in the great Scale of Beings.

§ 10.

Fall of *Adam*
brings on our
Probation.

Lastly, upon analyzing the Nature of all Rational Happiness in created Beings, we are forced to conclude it necessary, that in case *Adam* had not fallen, still, both the Innocence and Happiness of himself and all his Posterity, must unavoidably have rested upon the Bottom of their own *Free-Will*. Which Freedom of
Will,

§ 11.

His Freedom
liable to A-
buse.

Chap. X. Will, must again, of Necessity, be liable to Abuse in all *created* Beings; since all such Beings are unavoidably subject to that Evil of *Defect* or *Imperfection*, which God himself, without a Contradiction, can never wholly remove. He *may*, indeed, and probably *will*, make it continually lessen and decrease to all Eternity; by making the whole Body of reasonable free Beings, who shall attain to the State of Bliss, approach for ever nearer and nearer to the Throne of his own Glory, and of course nearer to absolute Perfection: But still the Evil of *Defect* or *Imperfection*, must for ever adhere, more or less, to every *created* Being, as is most evident. So that I hope I have now completely paved the Way to the grand Point in View; which is, to evince that God's permitting the *Fall of Adam*, and the subsequent *Depravity* and *Corruption* of the whole *Human* Race, was so far from being an Act either of *Cruelty*, *Weakness* or *Injustice*; that it was a most glorious Display of God's *Wisdom* and *Goodness*; and an Event most wisely calculated to promote, *enhance*, and *immortalize* the true and ultimate Happiness of our Nature.

C H A P. XI.

The main Point evinced, that the Fall of Man was most wisely permitted.

I Prove my Proposition thus. We have § I.
Use of a Probationary State. seen that an absolute Freedom of Will, is the necessary Foundation of all *Rational Happiness*. Hence it follows, that the Enjoyment of such Rational Happiness, even in Heaven itself, must *ever* be attended with a free Power of forfeiting that Happiness, whenever *we* shall be *so* inclined. The Angels themselves, who are now so happy in a near Attendance on the Throne of God, are free to abdicate that happy State, in case they should ever think fit so to do. For though there is no Colour of Reason to think they ever will do so, since their *habitual* Abhorrence of Sin, may, by *Analogy*, be as insuperable, as the Devil's Enmity to God and Goodness; still, their Wills and Affections, though fixed, must yet always be *Free*; and fixed by nothing but their own *Free Election*. For those miserable Spirits whom we now call *Devils*, were once as happy

Chap. XI. happy as *they*; the Difference between them being only *this*, that the Angels that *now are*, made a wise and proper Use of the Freedom of *their* Will; while they who fell did otherwise. Now therefore let us suppose, that neither our first Parents nor we, had ever known by Experience, what it was either to commit Sin, or to feel those *Miseries* which are the necessary Consequences of it. Let us suppose, further that after a certain Period of Years, the human Race, all free from Sin and Guilt, would have been translated from Earth to Heaven, without that dreaded Separation of Soul and Body, which we now call *Death*. But suppose this had been the Case; what then? Why still — our Wills would have been *free* — either to have enjoyed, or to have abdicated the Enjoyment of that happy State. The Scriptures, we see, have given us a strong Instance of like Sort, in the Case of those Spirits that actually *have* fallen. Those miserable Spirits were once of a superior Rank to Man, and possessed a higher Place in the great Ascending Scale of Nature; which makes it evident beyond all Dispute, that
they

they were created with higher and far nobler Faculties, than those that are now given, either to us the Sons of *Adam*, or to *Adam* before his Fall: And yet they fell, and even fell *for ever*. For so rancorous is the Rebellion into which they are fallen, that they have evidently finned themselves out of all Capacity of Repentance, and consequently have thrown themselves equally out of the Reach both of *Pardon* and *Happiness*. I argue then, that if these great and glorious Beings, blest with all their superior Advantages, were capable of such an amazing Abuse of their Free-Will, as to forfeit irretrievably so high a Degree of heavenly Bliss, how much *more* easily may we conceive, that *Mankind*, a Creature of yet lower and inferior Faculties, might have made a like Abuse of *their* Free-Will also, even *after* a Translation from Earth to Heaven. If a higher Order of Beings were capable of such Folly and Weakness, how natural, how unavoidable is it to suppose, that a lower and meaner *Species* of Creatures might still *more* easily have fallen into the same Error? It being evident,

M

dent,

Chap. XI. dent, beyond all Contradiction, that whatever was the Occasion of *their* Fall, might as well have been the Cause of *ours*; since whatever wrought so strongly upon *them*, might at least have wrought as powerfully upon *us*, as being weaker than they.

§ 2.
Exemplified
by Instances.

Now, what Method shall the divine Wisdom and Goodness take, consistent with the Freedom of our Will, to secure *us*, the Sons of *Adam*, from the Danger of so *terrible* and so *irretrievable* a Fall hereafter? Since we must, to all Eternity be, at least *liable* to a Fall, I would ask — What Means are there worthy of God's Wisdom, and suitable to our *free* Nature, to prevent our making so dangerous a Revolt? What Method can be conceived, more wisely adapted to the Accomplishment of this End, than our having had here, in this mortal State, a *Specimen* and *Foretaste* of the miserable, but sure and certain Consequences of Sin and Disobedience? What can be so likely to secure us from embracing *any* Evil, as having once had an experimental Knowledge of the Fruits of it? Read a moral

Lecture

Lecture to a Man inclined to vicious Courses, and he regards it little ; but let the same Man once feel the Pangs of an acute Distemper, brought upon him by those Courses, and it is Odds but he is most heartily convinced of his Folly. Chap. XI.

For in good Truth, as far as we can judge, both from daily Experience, and the necessary Reason of the Thing too, it seems impossible, if not for all Creatures in general, yet for all Creatures at least of *Our* Rank and Size, either rightly to estimate the Malignity of any Evil, without an experimental Sense and Feeling of it ; or to gain a just Notion of the real Value of any good we possess, 'till we have either known the Want of it, or had a Taste of the opposite Evil. I confess, that *to me*, the contrary Supposition looks like maintaining the Possibility of a Man's having a *Sensation* without a *Sensorium* ; or an adequate *Idea* of those Things, which can be reported to the Mind only through some *Sense*, without being either possessed of the Sensorial Inlet, or ever having had an Opportunity

§ 3.
And accounted for.

Chap. XI. to exert it. Or, in plainer Words, it
§ 3. seems to be, in the Nature of Things, impossible for any Man to attain to an adequate *Idea*, either of any *new Pleasure*, or any *new Pain*, merely by Speculation, or without *actual Experience*. Now, all the Advantages to be reaped from an *Experimental Comparison* of Good and Evil,—Pleasure and Pain,—Conformity to God's Will, and Rebellion against it (which all coincide, and are but *Synonymous Terms*) all these had been entirely lost to us hereafter, if God's Permission of the Fall of *Adam*, and the subsequent Corruption of our human Nature, had not thrown us into our present *State of Probation*. Without it our Minds had been a mere *Charte Blanche* hereafter, divested of all real Dread and just Abhorrence of Evil, having never felt it. Good we might have *tasted*, or rather have been surrounded with, but we could never have thoroughly *enjoyed* it, for want of having a right Notion of its Value; either from a Taste of the opposite Evil, or from a temporary Privation of the Good itself. We had been like little Children, who
are

are nursed up, indeed, very carefully and tenderly, by indulgent Parents, without any Care or Concern of their own; but cannot, without great Difficulty, be made sensible of the Value of what they enjoy, 'till they have been taught by Experience, what it is to be left destitute of *Necessaries*. I argue therefore, that our having here, in this Life, experimentally *known* and *felt* the evil Consequences of sinning against God; our having thoroughly experienced what it is to be cursed with the Society and Intercourse of base, wicked, and irreligious Spirits; — what it is to feel the Pangs of bodily Distempers, — and above all, the much more grievous Pangs of a Conscience tortured with a Sense of *Ingratitude, Folly, Sin* and *Guilt*: I say, the Remembrance of all this, cannot fail of proving a most *potent*, and, no Doubt, a very *sufficient* Motive and Inducement to us hereafter, to maintain our Integrity in Heaven, and not to *Abdicate* that happy State, as we see *some* even of the Angels have. In fine, it seems hard for human Reason to conceive, how it would be possible for us, without some previ-

Chap. XI. ous actual Experience, to be a sufficient Match for those Motives, *whatever they were*, that occasioned the Revolt of *Satan* and his *Accomplices*; and which might certainly with *more Ease*) have had a *like Effect* upon *us*.

§ 4.
This Scheme
displays the
divine Love.

Besides; be it remembered, that as nothing can attach us to our Duty, and of Course to our true Interest, either so forceably, or so agreeably to ourselves, as a sincere Love towards God; so, no positive *Good* bestowed upon us, can so warmly excite that Love, except it be joined with a Sense of Redemption from the opposite *Evil*. Hence, nothing can be so well contrived, to keep us firm to our Allegiance and true Interest hereafter, as a sincere Love towards the Deity, founded upon that strongest Instance that *we* can conceive of it, stronger, I think, *by far*, than that of our original Creation, I mean the Incarnation, Death and Sufferings of GOD THE SON. Of which glorious and amazing Scene of *Wisdom, Goodness, Mercy*, and even *Tenderness* towards Mankind, the Sin of *Adam*, and the Depravity of our Nature, were the
true

Chap. XI.
true and proper Introduction. And certainly our Redemption is, in many Respects, a Motive to Obedience, Love and Gratitude, infinitely superior to that of even our Original Creation. For it may be said of *Creation*, that as the Stock both of *Wisdom* and *Power* that effected it, was infinite; those Attributes could therefore be exerted at an *easy Rate*. Whereas, the Case was far otherwise in the Business of our *Redemption*; where the high Dignity of that divine Person, who *emptied himself of all his Glory*, condescended personally to taste and feel the greatest Miseries of our low Estate; *making himself of no Reputation, taking upon him the Form of a Servant, humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross*; all this, I say, must furnish us with such amazing Instances of Love and Goodness, as our bare *Creation* can, by no means, do.

Again. The meritorious Death and Sufferings of GOD THE SON, will add new Life and Spirit to us, from the Quarter of our *Hopes*; and our Hopes are another potent and rational Spur to our Duty. For it will teach us to argue thus. Since

§ 5.
And thereby
excites our
Hopes.

Chap. XI. God has given his Son to *die* for us, what Happiness shall he *not* give us, if by Patience, and Perseverance both *here* and *hereafter*, we shall but stand firm in our Allegiance? What should hinder, but that both *we*, and the whole System of free reasonable Beings, should be intended to move on, by a gradual Progress, for all Eternity, towards greater and greater Degrees of Perfection, Happiness and Glory, in such Proportion as our several Natures shall be capable of.

§ 6.
And cures us
of Pride.

Above all, our attaining to the heavenly State, through the Merits of *Christ*, must ever naturally arm us against that most dangerous *Condemnation of the Devil*, spiritual Pride. For the being apprized of our own *Demerits*, joined to a Sense of what we owe to each Divine Person of the adorable *Trinity*, for the respective Share of each, in the great Work of our Redemption; must naturally banish all proud *Self-sufficiency*, and generate that *Humility*, as well as *Love* and *Gratitude*, which are always the *strongest*, as well as the *pleasanteest* and most agreeable Cords, that a
Man

Man can be *drawn with*. And these Chap. XI.
must ever prove the most powerful Motives, to secure us from those vain, groundless, and conceited Notions of the Self-sufficiency of our own Nature, that are the most apt to draw us into a Rebellion against God. These will make us look upon our Dependance upon the Deity, in its only true and proper Light ;—as the greatest Honour, — the most valuable Privilege, — and the highest Felicity of our Nature ; — as that which in Time, must gradually assimilate *our* Nature to the *divine* Nature, and of course bring us daily nearer and nearer to true Happiness and real Glory, by bringing us daily nearer in *Affection, Taste, and Inclination*, to him who is all *Goodness and Perfection*.

Nor must we forget the Benefits and Advantages that we reap — even from what is called the *Curse upon the Earth* : Or that Change that was wrought in the Elements, whereby Mankind are obliged to submit to hard Labour and Pains, and to keep their Wits continually upon the Rack, in order to make this Globe of Earth

§ 7.

The Curse on the Earth beneficial in the End.

Chap. XI. Earth a convenient *Habitation* for us, and to pick a competent Subsistence as to *Meat, Drink, and Cloathing*, from out of it. Why, no doubt, but that at present, we should be very glad to exchange all this Labour and Toil, for the Indolence, Ease, and spontaneous Affluence of a *Paradisiacal State*; but still, irksome as all Labour and Pain both of *Body* and *Mind* may be; it not only teaches us to set a proper Value upon the Fruits of our own Industry, and so—to enhance greatly the Enjoyment of them, and of course our Gratitude to him who enables us to procure them; but, what is of infinitely higher Consequence to us, both *here* and *hereafter*, is this; that these very Wants and Necessities, which the Curse on the Earth brought upon us (and which may yet properly enough be stiled a *Curse*, as being attended with present *Pain*) that these, I say, are the Origin of all those ingenious *Arts* and *Sciences*, to which the major Part of our natural *Acumen* or Sagacity, Sharpness, and Penetration are owing. For bodily Wants and Necessities are plainly the Parents of Art and Ingenuity

nulty of every Kind. Hence comes *Agri-* Chap. XI.
culture, Gardening, Cloathing, Architecture,
Navigation, Trade, and Commerce: Which
 latter, by civilizing barbarous Nations, and
 by making every civilized Country upon
 Earth abound with *every thing*, does, in great
 Measure, restore to us the Delights of *Pa-*
radise. All of them, indeed, do naturally
 tend to compensate the Want of it; and,
 I must add, — with infinitely superior
 Advantages too, in many Respects. For
 had not Necessity, that Mother of Arts,
 drawn out all these, and many more, into
 Practice; it is plain that the Talents they
 now exercise had lain dormant in the
 Soul; and we had been destitute of nine
 Parts in ten of the Opportunities we now
 enjoy, both of contemplating the Attri-
 butes of God, and of being happy in the
 Application, Use, and Exercise of our
 own native Powers and Abilities.

Besides. That same Sharpness of Wit,
 which we naturally attain in our Re-
 searches into *Arts* and *Sciences* useful or
 ornamental to Life, is all subservient to
 higher and nobler Purposes. It is appli-
 cable,

§ 8.

And produc-
 tive of Rati-
 onal Happi-
 ness.

Chap. XI. cable, when once gained, to Researches of a Religious Nature ; and must absolutely make us fit and proper *Recipients* of much greater, more refined, and far more exalted Degrees of Heavenly Bliss hereafter, than otherwise we naturally *could* have been : Since, as we have already observed, the *Acuteness* as well as the *Number* of our natural Faculties, is a main Constituent of Happiness.

§ 9.
Therefore,
best upon the
Whole.

Had we therefore gone out of the World, in such a State as we must have been in, without the Fall of *Adam*, and its natural Consequence—the Introduction of a *Probationary* State ; we had been as unexperienced, ignorant, raw, and insipid Animals, as any in it. We had been ignorant of the high and noble Qualities, Gifts, and Endowments of our own Souls ; which had lain hid, like Ore in an untried Mine ; — Strangers to most of the principal Attributes of God ; and of course liable hereafter to surrender up our Innocence (without Remedy) to the first Temptation perhaps, that had befallen us, either from within or from without.

And

And even had we stood firm, we could never have been (naturally) so fit and proper Subjects of those high Degrees of refined Happiness in Heaven, as we now are according to the present Scheme of Providence. On all which Accounts, it may be safely concluded, that the Fall of *Adam*, was, in Effect, the Rise and Exaltation of his Posterity; and has introduced into the World infinitely more Good than Evil; however irksome the concomitant Evils may be to us *at present*. For though the Evils which we now feel, *may* sometimes make us wish, perhaps, that things had been otherwise constituted than they are; just as a sick Man may wish his Physic had been a little more palatable; yet, upon a calm Review of the Whole, we shall see Reason enough to conclude—that in the great and general Plan of Providence, THAT WHICH IS, IS BEST.

Some People, no doubt, will wonder to see a Man sit down seriously to write an *Apology* for the Introduction of Evil into the World, and may perhaps be apt to compare it to the writing of a *Panegyric* in

§ 10.
A vulgar Pre-
judice obvi-
ated.

Chap. XI. in Praise of the Devil. But the Wonder
§ 10. will cease, when they are made a little better acquainted with *themselves*. For their Case is plainly this. They have had a long experimental Acquaintance *before-hand*, both with Good and Evil; as must be supposed in the very Question: For otherwise, they had been incapable of disputing about Good and Evil at all. Well then; they have *felt* both, and *compared* them. And, of course, they have known enough of each, to abhor the one, and eagerly embrace the other. But then, these same People, totally forgetting how much of the Stamp of Value which they set upon Pleasure, was originally owing to a previous Sense of Pain; they are amazed after all this, that any Man can think that Pain, can be of the least Use in the Creation, or that any Convenience can be drawn from it; much less that it is so absolutely necessary a Contrast to Pleasure, that without it, we should never be able to estimate the true Worth and Value of Pleasure. 'Tis natural, from hence to advance a Step or two further in this Tract of Folly: And to think
that

that Men who had never known any other State than a Paradisiacal one, might enjoy it with the same Eagerness, Taste and Satisfaction, as they themselves would, were they to be transported into it, from out of this World, where they have first had the Advantage of a previous Sense of *Evil* as well as Good. A Man may as well think he can see without Light, as imagin that either positive Pleasure, or a bare Immunity from Pain, can ever be properly relished without a previous Sense of Pain. In fine then, Evils are many Times of the Nature of some Poisons, which may be made useful by being properly compounded with other Ingredients. But as to the Necessity of a Sense of Pain, in order to a due Estimation of Pleasure; let any one but take his Pen, and put down, in two collateral Columns, the following List of good and evil Things: 1. *Good and Evil.* 2. *Virtue and Vice.* 3. *Honesty and Knavery.* 4. *Peace and War.* 5. *Health and Sicknefs.* 6. *Strength and Weaknefs.* 7. *Pleasure and Pain.* 8. The Vigour of *Youth*, and the Infirmities of *Old Age.* 9. *Plenty and Want.* 10. *Rest and*

Chap. XI.

§ 10.

Chap. XI. and *Labour*. 11. *Joy and Sorrow*. 12. *A good Conscience and a bad one*. I say, let any Man but examine this Catalogue, comparing each with its Opposite, and then ingenuously tell me, what Sense Mankind could have had of the one, without the Contrast of the other.

§ 11.
The present
Scheme the
best.

It may perhaps be said, that the divine Omnipotence is able to supply all Defects; and that of course, God Almighty might have made us *equally* happy, without our having tasted *any* of those Evils which the Sin of *Adam* brought upon us. I answer, that no doubt *he might*: For he might have given us quite another *Sett* of Properties and Abilities than what he has. But pray what is the Consequence of such a Supposition? Why plainly this, that God had better never have made such a Species of Creatures as Men, at all. But then, there had been a needless *Gap*, *Break*, or *Interruption* in the great *Scale of Beings*; which we have already shewn to be contrary both to the Wisdom and Goodness of God to permit. For 'tis his great Glory to introduce into the *Universe*,

as

as many *Kinds* and *Degrees* of Good ; and Chap. XL
to make those several Kinds as perfect in
their Way, as is possible, and as far as is
consistent with their Rank and Post in the
general Scale of Beings. Therefore, sup-
posing *us* of the human Race to retain
our present Rank and Post in the Order
of Nature, there seems to be no conceiv-
able Way to promote our ultimate Good
and Happiness, comparable to that which
God's Wisdom has already taken.

Such are the Benefits and Advantages § 12.
of our present *Probationary* State ; from Conclusion,
whence we may conclude, — that there
are at least *Possible Reasons*, why God chose
to put us into it ; or, in other Words,
why he suffered the Devil to succeed in
his Temptation of *Adam* ; and why he
chose to annex the necessary Corruption
and Depravity of the *Whole* human Race,
to the single Transgression of their first
Progenitor. For if these are but *possible*
Reasons why God might permit all this,
— our Point is gained ; and it will fol-
low, that the literal Doctrine of the Fall
N of

Chap. XII. of Man, is *not repugnant* to our natural Reason, but agreeable both to *that* and to Revelation.

C H A P. XII.

A new Sett of Objections answered.

§ I.
First Objection, from God's doing nothing in vain.

THE Objections that here present themselves, are of an Appearance full as formidable as those we have already spoken to; but I hope, as easily solved. I shall first present them all in a Body to the Reader's View, and then proceed to examine the Merits of each of them separately. It may be objected then, in general, that there are Difficulties attending the Scheme of Solution here offered, that bear as hard upon the *Wisdom, Justice, Goodness, and Mercy* of the divine Nature, as any that attend the original Doctrine itself; what therefore do we gain by *such an Apology* or Solution? For Instance. According to this Scheme, it is wise and good in the *Deity*, to make our present *Probationary State*,
previous

previous to our Admission into that future State of Bliss, for which we are ultimately intended. If so, how comes it that God did not create us into our present State *at first*? It is very well known, that God never takes a round-about Method, by doing that *per plura*, which can be done as well *per pauciora*: His Wisdom evidently forbidding the taking any other but the *direct* and *immediate* Way to any *End*. How came he therefore, in this *sole* Instance that can perhaps be given, to forsake his own Rule of Action, and a Rule so evidently *wise*? If this State be, for the present, really better for us, for what Reason, except it were to tease and tantalize his Creatures with Accounts of compleat Happiness, Paradise, Immortality, Trees of Life, &c. for what Reason, I say, did he suffer our Nature to fall from so *desirable* a State, into so *bad* an one, rather than put us into our present State *at first*? This Method of Process seems therefore to clash with his *Wisdom*.

A second Difficulty there is, that seems most strongly to arraign his *Justice*; for

N 2

though

§ 2.
2d Objection,
from the Ignorance of
Heathens.

Chap. XII. though our present State of Probation, should indeed be allowed, according to these Reasonings, to turn to the most solid and durable Advantage of those who thro' the Faith and Practice of *Christianity*, shall attain to that State of Happiness and Glory which is promised in the *Gospel*; yet, it may still be asked, what shall become of those, all this while, who being Strangers to the Faith of *Christ*, have consequently miscarried, and for ever perished, merely through their *Original Corruption*? Shall the common Father of Mankind be so excessively partial, as to make one Part of his Creatures everlastingly happy, at the Expence of the other Part, who by the very same Dispensation or Oeconomy, are supposed to be made to all Eternity miserable, and that too without Remedy? For those unfortunate Heathens can neither be blamed for that original Corruption of their Nature, under which they labour; nor for not making Use of that *Gospel Light* which was never held out to them. So that this Doctrine still clashes with God's *Justice* as well as his *Wisdom*.

Then,

Then, *thirdly*; since it has been all along supposed, that without the Faith and Practice of *Christianity*, our present State of Probation can be of no Use to us; how then happens it, that the Benefits of Revelation were so long delayed and kept back from Mankind? No less than four thousand Years elapsed, before the whole Body of Mankind were blessed with the Aids of it, though they were as necessary *at first* as *at last*. For though the Law of *Moses* was, indeed, given two thousand Years sooner; still, it was, to all Intents and Purposes, confined to one single Nation. Why therefore was not a Benefit, at all Times and in all Places equally necessary, equally bestowed in all Times and in all Places? So that here God's *Mercy* and *Goodness* seem to stand indicted, as well as his *Wisdom* and *Justice*.

Chap. XII.

§ 3.

3d Objection, from Lateness of Revelation.

Fourthly; it may be objected, that as I have all along supposed the Evils and Inconveniences to which we are here subject, in our present mortal State of Trial and Probation, to be a Consequence of original Sin; it may be asked, — how would

§ 4.

4th Objection, from the present Face of Nature.

Chap. XII. the Case have been altered, if *Adam* had *not* fallen? Would not Nature have still born the same Face, and been subject to the same Laws? Would not the same *natural* Evils that incommode us *now*, have troubled us *then*? Suppose Mankind had never abused their Free-Will at all, still, — does not the present Constitution of things plainly evince, that the human Race must have been exposed to Labour and Toil, — to the Inclemencies of Heat and Cold, — to the same Pains and Diseases they now are subject to, and the Female Part of the Race, to the same Pangs in Child-birth, whether *Eve* had transgressed or no? How therefore can these Evils be deemed *Consequences* of the Fall of Man, when they so plainly result from a Scheme and Disposition of things, which is as old as the Creation itself, and consequently *prior* to that Fall, and must have existed just as they now do, if that Fall had never happened?

§ 5.
5th Objection. Or: Sin
not solved in
Scripture.

Fifthly; it may be objected, that since the Doctrine of original Sin, has ever proved such a stumbling Block to Mankind,

kind, and given so great Offence even to the best Friends of Christianity, in all Ages of the Church, — and is yet, at the same Time, so glorious a Display of God's Wisdom, Goodness, Justice and Mercy, as is here contended for; — it seems very strange, that the Scriptures should no where remove this Rock of Offence, by giving us a plain *Rationale* of it. Chap. XII.

'Tis objected, *sixthly*, that the Solution here offered is inadequate to the Difficulty, because all such as die in their Infancy, and before the Commission of actual Sin (which are a vast Proportion of the human Race) do of course go out of the World, without receiving the Benefit, either of the Christian Dispensation, or of that previous State of Probation, which, according to the Scheme here offered, is so absolutely necessary to secure and enhance the Happiness of Mankind hereafter. And yet, the Church of *England* decides, that “ it is certain by God's Word, that Children which are Baptized, dying before the Commission of actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved.”

§ 6.
6th Objection
from the Case
of Infants.

Chap. XII. And though the Word of God is silent as to the Case of *unbaptized* Infants so dying ; yet, every Attribute of the Divine Nature seems to make it clear, that even *unbaptized* Infants also, must stand at least a fair Chance of being made, some how or other, eternally happy hereafter.

§ 7.
From the Parables of the Labourers and Prodigal Son.

Seventhly and lastly, 'tis objected, that in some of our Saviour's Parables, the contrary to what we advance concerning the Nature of moral Habits, seems to be inculcated, or at least implied of course : Particularly in the two Parables of the *Labourers* in the Vineyard, and that concerning the Return and Reception of the *Prodigal Son*. These are all the Objections I have been able to recollect, against the Scheme here offered ; and they seem to admit of the most satisfactory, full, and clear Solutions ; and to these let us now proceed.

§ 8.
1st Objection answered from the Dignity of the Creator.

First then it is objected, that since our present State of Probation answers so many wise and good Purposes as I pretend ; why were we not created into it at first?

I

I reply, because the Method proposed Chap.XII. in the Objection, had been highly *unadviseable*, however *practicable*; and absolutely *impracticable*, had it been ever so *adviseable*. And that, on these following Accounts. *First*, it would have been making God, not so much the bare *Permitter* of Sin, and Wickedness, as — the true and proper *Author* of it. To the *Permission of Sin for a Time*, we have seen that both his Wisdom and Goodness may, in many Cases, incline him; but, it derogates too much from *both these*, to suppose him at *any Time* to become, as it were, the true and proper *Cause* of it; as he *must* have been, had our present Depravity been the immediate Work of his own Hands, rather than the Effect of some evil *moral Agency*, wisely permitted for the present.

Secondly. Since we have seen that all Creatures must be ever liable to the Evil of *Defect*, and of course to an Abuse of their Freedom, it was wise and good in the *Creator* to apprize us of the Envy, Malice and Subtilty of our spiritual Foe.

Which

§ 9.

— From the Use of knowing our spiritual Foe.

Chap. XII. Which Advantages had been lost to us, according to this Scheme; since it would have prevented that Experimental Sense of his Craft and Cunning, which we have now gained from his Seduction of our first Parents. Then again,

§ 10.
— From its
demeaning
the Merits of
Christ.

Thirdly. Had our present Depravity been the immediate Work of God, it must have diminished *something* at least, both from the Merits of our Saviour's *Sufferings*, and from our Gratitude for subsequent *Redemption*. For, of course, there had been less Cause for that Love towards our Redeemer, which is now so justly founded upon his free and voluntary *Sufferings* for us; since, *then*, it had seemed but little more than bare *Justice* in God, to have redeemed us from those Evils, of which himself had been the immediate *Cause* and *Author*, rather than barely the *Permitter*. And whatever *Scheme* tends rather to hide any of God's Attributes from us, can never be so advisable, as that which has a natural Tendency to make them all shine out upon us, with the greatest Lustre. But,

Fourthly,

Fourthly, and lastly. It is much to be doubted, whether or no we possibly *could*, in the Nature of Things, have ever been at all delivered from any such Depravity, as we had been originally *created* into. Indeed, as Things *now* stand, our *Depravity* is not *our Nature*, but — *the Disease of our Nature*. A *Disease* may be cured, but how it is possible to cure *a Nature*, if I may be allowed the Expression, is hard to be conceived; except it be done by *Annihilation*; which is much such another Cure for an *Evil Nature*, as cutting a Man's Head off is, for an *Evil Disease*. We may therefore safely conclude, that had this been the Case, there had been no possible Cure for us; but that some flat Contradiction in the Nature of Things, had stood in the Way and prevented it, though such an one, perhaps, as we, at present, are not able to conceive or point out.

Chap. XII.

§ 11.

— From the Necessity of the Thing.

Come we therefore to examine the Merits of the *second* Objection; which seems to bear hard upon God's *Justice*, in regard to *that* Part of Mankind, who have

§ 12.

2d Objection. The Mistakes 'tis founded on.

Chap. XII. have neither known, nor ever *could* know,
 § 12. any thing at all of the Benefits and Advantages of *Revelation*; and who are consequently supposed to be made for ever miserable, through the Means of their *Original Corruption*. But here we must observe, that much of the Force of this Objection will be taken off, if we consider, that the Fall of *Adam* has introduced no Compulsion upon our Free-Agency, which *obliges us to sin*; but — only such a Depravity of the Will as barely *inclines*, but never *forces* us to transgress. For in every Instance of a known Sin, we may, if we please, oppose our own Reason and Conscience against this Depravity of the Will. The Objection is also founded upon wrong Notions of the whole Scheme of Redemption: As well as upon Expressions in Scripture irrationally explained. For 'tis wrong to think that “ the Oeconomy of *Redemption* does
 “ not, more or less, affect the *whole* Body
 “ of Mankind, but *those only* to whom
 “ the Gospel is *Personally* propounded;
 “ while all to whom it is not made
 “ known, shall, for their invincible Ignorance,

"norance, be damned without Remedy." Chap. XII.

§ 12.

For the Truth is, that the Scripture all along supposes the Benefits of *Christ's* Passion to be — though not *equally*, yet — *universally* dispensed. *Equally* dispensed they *could not possibly be*; because we shall largely shew hereafter, *à priori*, or from the very Nature of the Thing itself, that Revelation could not be equally dispensed to all: And it is both reasonable in itself, and consonant to Scripture, that they who gladly embrace it, should reap much higher Advantages from it, than they who are utter Strangers to it. But still, the Merits of *Christ* are, more or less, *universally efficacious*; and *all* Men, whether they know it or no at present, shall reap, though not *equally great*, yet, very considerable Advantages from it. Indeed, to say in what particular *Manner* the Merits of *Christ* shall be applied to those who never heard of him; this we cannot do, because the Scriptures are silent upon that Head. And no Wonder that they are; for surely it had been very *useless* to have told us *how*; because it is supposed, in the very Question itself, that no Man
who

Chap. XII. who can read the Scriptures, *can* have the least Occasion to know it. It is enough for such an one, that he can learn from thence, his own Duty *here*, and his Expectations *hereafter*. And it is enough for any of us to know, that even they who are Strangers to the Faith of *Christ*, shall yet — some Way or other, and in some Proportion or other, reap Benefits from that precious Blood.

§ 13.
Case of Heathens and Christians, how they differ.

The Difference between *ourselves* and *them*, consists chiefly in these two things. First, *we* indeed know the Manner *how we* shall be benefited by the Death of Christ; but we do not know in what Manner or Proportion his Merits shall be applied to *them*; nor is it worth while to offer any *Conjectures* upon the Point; because I shall cite one particular Text, that is worth a thousand of the best *Conjectures* in the World: *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Gen. xviii. 25. And then secondly, there is also this important Difference between us; that as *their* future Happiness will be far inferior to *ours*, so will their Punishments also be;
for

for *much* is committed to *us*, and but *little* Chap.XII.
to *them*. And for the very same Reason,
all who have, or *may* have if they will —
the Advantages of Christianity, but yet
continue in a State of Sin and Wicked-
ness, *there* indeed, both common Sense
and Revelation are sufficiently clear ; that
the Lot of such, is, “ a certain fearful
“ looking for of Judgment and fiery In-
“ dignation ; to devour them for treading
“ under Foot the Son of God, and doing
“ Despite to the Holy Spirit of Grace.”
And such Men would do well to confi-
der *in Time*, “ how fearful a Thing it is
“ to fall into the Hands of the living
“ God.” In a Word, all Men will be
judged hereafter, according to the Law
they have, and not according to the Law,
they have not. For, *unto whomsoever much*
is given, of him shall much be required, and
vice versa. And upon this most righte-
ous Principle, we read, that *that Servant*
that knows his Lord's Will, but does it not,
shall be beaten with many Stripes ; but he
that knows it not, and commits Things [that
appear by natural Reason to be] *worthy*
of Stripes, shall be beaten with few. Hence
also

Chap. XII. also may we gather, that there will hereafter be very various Degrees both of Happiness and Misery, a Consideration that easily solves both *this*, and many other Difficulties.

§ 14.
Salvation explained.

If it be said, that there are many Passages in Scripture that carry Things far beyond the Lenity here represented; — that there are Texts which absolutely exclude all those unhappy People from *Salvation*; I answer, that the Word *Salvation*, as we have had Occasion to observe before, has, in Scripture Language, a two fold Sense. First, it often signifies our *ultimate* or *final* State of Happiness in Heaven; which is the highest and most spiritual Sense of the Word: But it has also a lower and less noble Signification, denoting only our being put *into a salvable State*; or into such a Pathway, as, if steadily pursued, shall finally bring us to the wished for State of perfect Happiness in Heaven. Hence, the same Term is often applied to *Baptism*; Baptism being, by God's special Appointment, the Door thro' which we are to enter into that salvable State.

Now,

Now, all untaught *Heathens* must, *Ex* Chap.XII.
Hypothesi, be excluded from Salvation in
that latter Sense; for otherwise, they had
been—not *Heathens*, but *Christians*, within
the Pale of the Church. And as they are
of course, out of the Limits of that salva-
ble State, through which alone we can
arrive at the highest State of Happiness
and Perfection; it necessarily follows, that
they *must* hereafter be *disabled* and *disquali-
fied* to attain to that sublime Degree of
Glory and Felicity. But though they
must of course be excluded from that
high State of Happiness and Perfection, to
which nothing but Evangelical Obedi-
ence *can* open the Way; still, as there
must and *will* be various Degrees of Hap-
piness and Misery hereafter, it follows,
that an honest moral Heathen, who has
made a proper Use of *such* Lights as he
had, may attain to no contemptible a De-
gree of future Happiness. Of course then
those Texts that seem to subject the un-
taught *Heathen*, all in a Body, without
Distinction, to *the Wrath of God* and utter
Damnation, must be understood with a
reasonable Latitude; viz. that the best
O Estate,

Chap XII. Estate, to which the very best of them can arrive, must be so far inferior to *that* to which the Faith and Practice of Christianity shall advance its Professors, as, *in a comparative Sense*, to merit the Appellation of God's *Wrath*, and to be stiled *Damnation*. But to suppose that such People will, only for *not* knowing what they never *could* know, be adjudged to the same Degrees, of the same positive Punishments, that wicked Christians shall ; — this Position has as little Foundation in Scripture, as it has in common Sense and Reason, For the most that these People will suffer by the Want of Revelation, will be, their being doomed to fill a lower Station in the Scale of Beings ; and to feel less both of Happiness and Misery, than good or bad Christians will : But, as to utter Damnation, — what a plentiful Crop would the Devil reap, from the Passions and Follies of Mankind, were the Creator but as ready to damn *us*, as *we* are to damn *one another* !

§ 15.

Unequal Dispensations vindicated by the Necessity of the Thing.

Nor is the *Inequality* of such spiritual Dispensations, the least Objection either to

to any one divine Attribute, or to the divine Origin of those sacred Books in which they are recorded. For, *first*, it is necessary that the great Creator and Governor of the Universe, should *so* distribute all his Favours, as best to consult the Good of *the whole*. Hence, if some of God's Blessings are *of that Sort* that they *cannot*, in the Nature of Things, be given in full Perfection, all at once, to the whole Race of Mankind, from first to last; it follows, that they must be dispensed *gradually*, and in such Proportion as they to whom they are given, shall be qualified to receive them, and to convert them to their proper Use. Whenever this happens to be the Case, those of the earlier Ages *cannot* in the Nature of Things, be blessed with the same Proportions of them, as those of the following Ages *may*. And as God alone can search our Hearts, God alone can be Judge of the proper Times and Seasons, when such and such Proportions of his Favours *can* be granted to us, so as best to answer the End and Intent of their being granted *at all*. Now Revelation is a Blessing absolutely of this

Chap. XII. Sort ; for we shall shew largely, in its proper Place, that the full Advantages of the Christian Profession, could not *possibly*, without a Contradiction, have been granted *equally* to all Men, in all Ages and Countries.

§ 16.
And from the
Objection
proving too
much.

Then, *secondly*, none of these Inequalities in any of God's Spiritual Dispensations, can, in themselves, be any Objection to the divine Origin of *Christian Revelation*, because they prove too much. The same Argument proves equally against the very *Being* of any God at all ; a Position which, I think, no Man of late Years has been quite hardy enough to maintain. For if it be contrary to our natural Notions of God, to suppose him to grant his spiritual Blessings to his Creatures, in various Proportions and at various Times ; it must, by the same Rule, be also contrary to them to dispense his *temporal*, or *natural* Advantages, in that unequal Manner in which we *yet* see he does. For Instance ; how comes it that the human Race are not as wise at the End of five Weeks, as at the End of fifty Years ?

Years? And how come ten thousand other things to happen that are of like Sort? For if human Reason, or the Light of Nature, be so all-sufficient as to enable us to attain to the utmost Perfection and Happiness that our Nature is capable of; why then does it come *so late in Life*, that one third of a Man's Days are generally run out, before the Legislature of any one wise civilized Country upon Earth, will venture to trust him with the Management of his own Property? Again, how comes the Reason of a *Hottentot*, who, by howling at the Full Moon, should seem to have *some* Notion of religious Worship; how comes it, I say, to fall so far short of the all-sufficient Talents and Abilities of an *English* Deist; who commonly maintains by his Practice, that we have no Occasion for any religious Worship at all? Nay, there would be no End of the Objection; for if we are to quarrel with God for not giving us *more*, only because he has already given us *much*, this would hold equally good, against the Wisdom of God's making an *Ascending* or *Descending* Scale of *Beings*; or

Chap. XII. even against his creating any thing at all : Since the Evil of *Defect*, must for ever leave room for an unthankful Spirit, to murmur on to all Eternity, for want of higher and higher Perfections. But of this enough ; upon the whole then, it is evident that “ we have no Occasion to be
“ so solicitous about those who *are* or *have*
“ *been* utter Strangers to the Faith of
“ Christ ; — that they are in no Danger
“ of Damnation for not *doing* or *knowing*,
“ what they neither *could do*, nor *could*
“ know ; and that God’s placing *us* and
“ *them* under Dispensations so very unequal, is no more than agreeable to his
“ Manner of acting in many other Cases ;
“ and of course, no Sort of Objection to
“ the divine Authority of the Gospel,
“ but consonant both to *that* and to common Sense and Justice ; — and consequently, ’tis what should excite our
“ Gratitude rather than our Murmuring,
“ since the Advantage lies plainly on *our*
“ Side.” So much for the *second* Objection, to which our *Rationale* of the literal Doctrine of *Original Sin* seemed liable.

It

It may be objected, *thirdly*, that “ since
 “ it has all along been supposed, that
 “ without the Faith and Practice of
 “ Christianity, our present State of Pro-
 “ bation can be of no Use to us; how
 “ then happens it, that the Benefits of
 “ *Revelation* were so long delayed and
 “ kept back from Mankind?” In An-
 fwer to this, we must always remember,
 that the great Business of Revelation is —
 TO INFLUENCE THE MINDS OF FREE
 AGENTS. And many of those, who can
 readily enough bring this, and the like
 Objections against Providence; may not,
 perhaps, thoroughly comprehend the true
 Nature of such a Task; which must be
 performed, not by Force, but by Ratio-
 nal Persuasion *only*. Consequently, it re-
 quires a clear and distinct Insight into the
Capacities, as well as *Inclinations*, of such
 Free Beings, to know certainly *when* any
 Rational Applications may be made to
 them with any tolerable Success. It
 would be weak in the Deity, and there-
 fore unworthy of him, to offer such Ap-
 plications as he knew before hand would
 not be effectual, for want either of *Capa-*

Chap. XII.

§ 17.

3d Objection
 answered
 from the Na-
 ture of Free
 Agency.

Chap. XII. *city or Inclination, or both, in those to whom they are addressed. Therefore, as the Times and Persons proper for such Applications, can be known but to God alone, it is absolutely impossible for any Man to point out those particular Times and Persons, which are fittest for this or that Kind of Address to Mankind, which we commonly stile REVELATION. We can guess, indeed, but we can only guess.*

§ 18.
From Analogy.

In order therefore to do our best, the Case, in general, may perhaps be this: That as God's *Goodness* seems to incline him to dispense his Blessings as *largely*, in regard to *Proportion*, as *early* in Point of *Time*, and as *widely* in respect to *Extent* or *Universality*, as the proper Subjects of such Blessings are capable of receiving them; so, his Wisdom seems to withhold him from bestowing them, in regard either to Degree, Time, or Extent, *in vain*. In the Case of many a natural Endowment, he certainly follows this Rule; to reason therefore from *Analogy*, it is a strong Presumption, that God's Wisdom followed this same Rule, in dispensing

penfing the Bleffings of Revelation to Mankind: That he gave it *gradually*, as Mankind were beft able to receive it with any good Effect, or real Advantage to themfelves. Now in regard both to bodily Growth, and intellectual Improvement, there is an evident *Analogy*, between individual Perfons, and the whole collective Body of Mankind. As each Individual grows, from the fmalleft Origin, to daily greater and greater Perfection, both of bodily Strength and Size, and of Rational Abilities, 'till the prefixt Limits of both are attained; fo — *it is*, (and as the Writers upon the gradual Progreff of the World towards Perfection, have undeniably evinced) it ever *has been*, in all Ages, the fame with the Collective Body of Mankind. Had the Creator given us, in our earlieft Infancy, as perfect a Ufe of our Rational Faculties, as we enjoy in our adult Age; he had then (befides other Inconveniencies that might be named) have run counter to his Wisdom, which permits him to do nothing in vain; becaufe fuch compleat Faculties had been totally ufelefs to an Infant State,
for

Chap. XII. for want of that Matter to work upon, which nothing but Experience, and a competent Acquaintance with the several Objects about us, can supply. Hence, however useful *Reason*, or the *Light of Nature* may be to us in general, still, as no Man counts it any Objection to the Principles of what we call *Natural Religion*, that God does not give it us earlier in Life; so, neither is it one Jot more reasonable to object the *Lateness* of the Christian Dispensation, with regard to the whole Body of Mankind. The gradual Growth of the Human Race, in regard both to Body and Mind, do absolutely require a similar Process; and therefore the Process being in both Cases similar, it follows, that neither the *Wisdom* nor *Goodness* of God can justly be impeached in either Case.

§ 19.
From the Necessities of
young Colonies.

For to come closer to the Point. The Dispersion and Increase of the Human Race, is, to the Body Politic of Mankind, what the Growth of the Body is to an Individual. Had Mankind not been dispersed into separate *Colonies*, they must have

have been checked in their Increase, for Chap.XII.
want of Elbow Room. Had they been
checked in their Increase, there had been
fewer Objects existing, to have enjoyed
the Benefits of Revelation, when once
it should come. Hence, it became ne-
cessary for the Almighty to tolerate these
lesser Evils, which are the necessary Con-
sequences of the speedy Increase of Man-
kind. And let us see of what Nature
these Evils were. In order therefore to
the speedier peopling the Earth, young
Colonies must be every where detached.
Suppose the Planters of these *Colonies* to
be *ever* so well instructed in the Princi-
ples of Religion, before their Seperation
from the main Body; still, such are the
Necessities of every young *Colony*, that all
mere sedentary Speculation, *must* give way
to the more pressing Cares for the pro-
viding of bodily Necessaries in an uncul-
tivated Country. A Consideration, which,
added to the perishable and *evanescent* Na-
ture of all *oral Tradition*, makes it evident
that such *Colonies* must of course, in a
few Generations, be sunk in *Ignorance* and
Barbarism; in Proportion, generally as
they

Chap. XII. they are, more or less distant, in *Time* or *Place*, from the Head Quarters from which they were detached. This will throw them under inconvenient and unnatural Forms of Government ; such as either mean-spirited and disingenuous *Asiatic* Slavery on one Hand, or a Kind of *American* Savage Anarchy on the other. Bad Forms of *Government* must occasion bad *Discipline* ; bad *Discipline* will introduce a total Neglect and Ignorance of *Education*, both as to *Name* and *Thing*. And it is evident, that the Want of timely and proper Cultivation, must utterly destroy all those moral Qualifications which are requisite either to make Religion take any durable Root, or to bring forth those Fruits for the Sake of which it was planted ; all such moral Qualifications being incompatible with a State of *Barbarism*, as is most evident. And now, in this Kind of Soil, where shall we find a Spot fit to sow the Seeds of Christianity in ? We may as well sow Corn on a naked Rock, as preach Christianity to any Animal that cannot be called a *Man*, as no uncivilized *Barbarian* properly can. Hence it is that
our

our *American* Missioners, do so frequently remonstrate, “ that they must first make “ *Men* of their *Savages*, before they “ can make them *Christians*.” Therefore God’s Wisdom is no more to be censured for not conferring the Benefits of Revelation upon *such* People, than for not ordering it to be preached to *Brutes*. For it is evident, that Men in this Situation, Men *thus* corrupted by inveterate bad Habits, as well as by the evil Examples of all around them, cannot possibly be candid, fair, or impartial Judges of a Revelation, till they have been gradually civilized, and made capable of Rational Instruction. And it is plain from the Answer given to the last Objection, that we have no Sort of Occasion to be so solicitous about the State of those barbarous Nations, any further than to assist them charitably when we can.

And here, it is worth while to observe, how wonderfully God’s Providence has favoured the Christian Nations of *Europe*, in this Respect, with regard, not only to that vast Tract of Land called *America*,
but

§ 20.
Advantages
of Modern
Colonies.

Chap. XII. but also to all the *European Settlements* in *Asia* and *Africa*; whereby the Prophecy of *Noah* has been so signally fulfilled within these three last Centuries: viz. *God shall convert and enlarge Japhet*. For it has so fallen out, through the *unseen* but *over-ruling* Providence of God, no doubt; that the *European Settlements* and Plantations there, are not so properly *independent Colonies*, as Detachments from the *Mother Country*, for the more convenient carrying on of Trade: Which Detachments are of course, so linked and incorporated with the Mother Country, *into* which, all their Commerce circulates, and con-centers at last; that by these Means they constantly partake of nearly all the spiritual Improvements they might have enjoyed, had they stayed at Home: But which they could not have partaken of, had they been settled upon the same *Plan*, with the ancient *Egyptian, Phœnician, Greek, and Roman Colonies*; who were perfectly detached from, and independent of—each Mother Country. But to return to the ancient Colonies, whose *Barbarism* seems principally owing to their Detachment from the
main

main Body of those, who from *the Plain* Chap.XII.
in the Land of Shinar, were scattered abroad
upon the Face of all the Earth.

Let us now see, whether these Evils, consequent upon the general Dispersion at *Babel*, could any way (according to the ordinary Deductions of our human Reason) have been prevented. And we shall soon find that — they *no way could*; without introducing such a Change in the Constitution of things, as must, upon the whole, have been evidently *a Change for the worse*. For, there seem to be but *four* conceivable Ways, either of *preventing* or *curing* these Inconveniences. Let us examine each of them.* The *first* is, to suppose every Man to set out, with a sufficient Stock of *Personal Illumination*, for his Guide in religious Matters. But here, if this *inspired Light* be not distinguishable from the ordinary Operations of the Man's own Spirit, then — it will be *no Light to him*;

§ 21.
Only four
Ways to cure
these Evils.
1st, Bad.

* I most gratefully acknowledge the Obligation I am here under, to Dr. *Law's* Considerations, &c. from whom I have taken the Substance of a Page or two, for the Sake of such of my Readers, as may not have that excellent Book at Hand.

Chap. XII. *him* ; but *if it be* distinguishable from them, it must become so, by being of so *forcible* and *over bearing* a Nature, as either to *destroy* or *diminish* the free Agency of the Man ; which for Reasons, often enough repeated, God cannot suffer. For the same Reason, such *Illumination* must be of a *resistable* Nature ; of course it may be *falsely pretended to*, and perverted with the greatest Ease, to all the Ends of *Knavery* and *Imposture* ; and be in all Cases capable of being as much neglected, as the Dictates of natural Conscience are now. Add to this, that were God, according to this Supposition, to confine himself wholly to *this* Kind of Revelations, he must, of course, preclude himself from all Possibility of *Reforming* any religious Abuses, except he has Recourse to downright *Force* upon our *Freedom*. Therefore this (the Method of personal Illumination) had been a Mode of Revelation neither *practicable* nor *adviseable*. For as every Man might then plead his own inward Illumination, in Defence of any Knavery or Folly ; and as there would then, *ex hypothesi* be no external, stated,
written

written Rule of Faith and Practice to have Chap. XII.
 Recourse to, all Means of Reformation
 must consequently be excluded. The
 Case of the *Romanists* is similar to this.
 We see, they plead the Infallibility of
 their Church, though they know not pre-
 cisely where to look for it, still they plead
 it in Bar to all Reformation ; even of such
 Errors as themselves would gladly shake
 off if they could. For hence it was, that
 at the *Council of Trent* (Sess. 7. Can. 11.)
 they found themselves obliged to swallow
 down that monstrous Absurdity, that “ the
 “ Intention of the Minister is requisite to
 “ make a Sacrament valid.” A Position,
 that as effectually destroys all Proof of
 their being either an *infallible* Church, or
 even any Christian Church at all, as any
 thing that was ever demonstrated in *Euclid*.
 And all this, because the same Blunder
 had been established before, by another
 infallible *Council* ; that at *Florence*, I think.

Then, *secondly*, instead of this Method,
 let us suppose a Revelation, the same in Sub-
 stance with what we *now* have, to have been
 made to every distinct *Colony* after their Se-
 P paration

§ 22.
 The *second*
 insufficient.

Chap. XII.

§ 22.

paration from the main Body. This would have been an endless and impracticable Task; for by the same Rule, not only every separate *Colony*, but even every separate *Planter* in every *Colony*, might expect the same Indulgence; and why should not the same be extended to every Individual descendant *from them*? But then, how shall the *Seal of Heaven* be set to such numerous Revelations as these? The *Principal* Evidences of a divine Interposition, and indeed the *only* Evidences that I, for my Part, am capable of conceiving, are either *Prophecies*; whereby we know the Revelation to come from him who is the Lord and Maker of the rational or invisible World of *Spirits*; or else *Miracles*, whereby he proves himself to be the Creator and Governor of the *visible* Creation, by the Power he has of *suspending* or *controlling* the ordinary stated Laws of Nature. Now, neither of these Proofs could have been applied to Revelations supposed to be so numerous, as is most evident. For, in the *first* Place, a Prophecy is an Argument of a divine Interposition, only as it is A MIRACLE; and

and next, *all* Miracles lose their very Nature and Essence, by the Frequency of their Repetition; a Miracle being *in reality* — nothing more than a *Phænomenon rarely seen*: All Nature being, properly speaking, one continued Miracle. Besides, the first Race of Men, for many Generations, would never have been able, in many Cases, to have distinguished a *real Miracle*, from a *natural Phænomenon*, for Want of that Acquaintance with the ordinary Course of Nature, which *can* be gained only from the united Observations of a great Number of Ages. Therefore such a Series of Revelations, must have been inconsistent with the very Nature of Revelation in general; because — *destitute of all Proof*; and consequently, in Effect, no Revelation at all; because, no rational Address to rational Creatures. Therefore, this Method also had been impracticable. And it would have been *unadvisable*, had it been ever so easily *practicable*; for such numerous Revelations, had made it the easiest Thing in Nature, for any ill designing Persons falsely to have pretended to Divine Revelation, in order to cover the

Chap. XII.
§ 22.

Chap. XII. vilest Purposes, and to promote the basest Ends. Therefore let us try

§ 23.
The *third* in-
sufficient.

A *third* Method; and suppose the Substance of Revelation (as far as the Nature of the Thing would permit) to have been given, once for all, to *Adam*; or if you please, to have been renewed again to *Noah*, after the Flood, with a strict Charge to hand down the same, unadulterated, to his Posterity. Here, what Proofs could such a Revelation have had? How would it have appeared, but that *Adam*, or *Noah*, or both, had been guilty of a *pious Fraud*, for the Regulation and Good of their Posterity? Therefore, this Kind of Process had also been *impracticable*, since a Revelation, so given, must have come — *void of all Proof*, as in the former Case; that is, in Effect it had been *no Revelation* at all. Therefore there only remains a

§ 24.
The *fourth*
alone practi-
cable.

Fourth Way; which is, by gradually opening and unfolding, from time to time, ONE UNIFORM SYSTEM, according as *they* to whom it is communicated, shall, from time to time, be qualified to receive

ceive it. And this is the Method which Chap.XII.
 God's Wisdom has, in Fact, made Use
 of; and a Method it is, that well answers
 all the wise and gracious Ends and Inten-
 tions of its Author. It leaves room for
 all those unanswerable Arguments of its
 Divinity, that can be drawn from *Prophe-*
cies or *Miracles*; which in their own Na-
 ture do, both of them, require, as we
 observed before, a previous Flux of Ages.
 This gives Time for the Formation and
 Establishment of a great Variety of *Seets*
 and *Religions*, from whence we draw the
 Advantage of grounding our Faith, on
 the unwilling Evidence of even its bitter-
 est Enemies. And our Scriptures being
 a standing Rule of Faith and Manners,
 committed to Writing, once for all, and
 of indisputable Authenticity, we may at
 all Times have Recourse to them, either
 for the Detection of *Fraud* or *Error*, or
 for the Reformation of such Abuses, as
 may, from Time to Time, creep in,
 through the *Ignorance*, *Negligence*, or *Kna-*
very of some of its Professors. As to the
 particular Time, in which this admirable
 Scheme was compleated by the Incarna-

Chap. XII. tion and Death of the Son of God, it was, of all others, a Period of Time, the fittest for that Purpose : Since the World was then, for the first Time, in a Capacity either to *receive*, — *examine* — *propagate*, — or to *transmit* to Posterity, such a Scheme as that of the Christian Gospel was. So that had he came *sooner* than he did, it had been like exhibiting a fine pompous Show, in the Dead of a dark Night. But I am here entering upon a most unbounded Task, and one that has been so well executed by such a Variety of Writers of great Note and Eminence, that it is needless to enlarge upon this Head. If the Reader is desirous of seeing these Points more copiously discussed, let him read *Dr. Law's Considerations on the State of the World, &c.* in 8vo. *Camb.*

§ 25.
The whole
Objection
groundless.

But what crowns all, with regard to the *Lateness of Revelation*, is this : That in Fact, the whole Objection may fairly be said to be built upon a Falsehood. For, that grand Point in which all Revelation centers, and which, of all others, the most affects our present Inquiry, I mean

mean the *Merits* and *Attonements* of the Chap.XII.
All-sufficient Sacrifice; this, I say, was revealed to Mankind immediately after the Fall. For that the *Patriarchal Sacrifices* were of divine Institution, and that the *Believers* of those Ages well knew them to be *Typical* of the future *Sacrifice* and *Attonement* of *Christ*, has indeed been denied by *some*, but has been fully evinced by many others. By none, perhaps, more clearly than by Mr. *Ridley*, in his *Christian Passover*; who plainly shews, that *this* was the Faith which made the Sacrifice of *Abel* more excellent than that of *Cain*, according to *Heb. iv. 11*. That this Faith was transmitted from *Adam* to *Noah*, is evident, from the Sacrifice which *Noah* offered up on his coming out of the Ark, *Gen. viii. 21*, which Sacrifice is there termed רֵיחַ הַנִּיחֹחַ [*Réach Hanni-chóach*] a very remarkable Expression it is, occuring a matter of forty times, in the *Ritual Parts* of the *Pentateuch*, and always there applied to Sacrifices which were *incontestably*, of *divine Institution*. If therefore, the *Patriarchal Sacrifices* had not had the same *Divine Origin* with the

Chap. XII. *Mosaic* ones, that *Holy Spirit*, which never leads us into Errors, would hardly have applied the same *very particular* Expression to *both*. Again, as the Words *Réach Hannichóach*, which our *English* renders a *sweet-smelling Savour*, do properly denote — a *Savour of Peace and Reconciliation*, it is evident that *Noah* knew what he was about when he sacrificed; otherwise, a bare Material Oblation, without a *mental Intent* in it, had been no more agreeable to God *then*, than mere *bodily Prostration*, and the Sound of Men's *Voices* in Prayer, are acceptable to him *now*, without a suitable *Frame of Mind*, and *Disposition of Heart*. The Consequence of all this, is, that there never was a Time when Mankind either *had not*, or at least *might have had*, a Knowledge of the All-sufficient Sacrifice, but for *their own Fault*. If then God gave the earliest Ages such a Knowledge of the *Scheme of Redemption*, as their Situation either *required* or *admitted* of, but which they *themselves* either neglected *to keep in Mind*, or to *transmit* to Posterity; why then the
Fault

Fault was wholly *theirs*, and God's *Goodness* and *Justice* stand fully vindicated. Chap.XII.

Pass we on now to examin the *fourth* Objection, taken from the "high Improbability, that the Face of Nature would ever have been other than it is, had *Adam* fallen or no: That therefore the *Natural* Evils, consequent, as they are supposed, upon the Fall of Man, do, in Reality, result from a Disposition of Things that is *prior* to that Fall." I answer. The Creator, clearly foreseeing all that *was* to happen, did, no doubt, *originally* adapt the new-formed Globe of Earth, to all that he foresaw *would* happen. Had neither *Adam* nor any of his Posterity ever fallen, nor ever stood in need of any previous State of Probation, God *must* have foreseen it: And then, no doubt, but he would have moulded the whole Frame of Nature accordingly; and those Laws of Nature to which we now are subject, had been altered in some Respects. Perhaps either the Globe of the Earth, or the Mechanism of the Human Frame, had been then

§ 26.

4th Objection answered from divine Prescience.

Chap. XII. then different from what it now is. Or, if these had remained the same — the Creator might still have made us Inhabitants of some other Planet, or of some other Solar System. For what is it that a clear Fore-knowledge, armed with infinite Power, and guided by infinite Wisdom, cannot with Ease effect?

§ 27.
Nothing contingent as to God.

This I take to be a full and clear Answer to the Objection. But I cannot wholly dismiss the Topic we are upon, without observing, that with regard to the divine Mind, there are, properly speaking, no such Things as Contingences at all: Because God looks into Futurity, with more *Certainty*, *Ease*, and *Perspicuity*, than *we* can see the plainest Objects before our Faces. And 'tis *impossible* the Case should be otherwise, since nothing *can* exist in Nature, but what *must* be, both in *itself* and in its *Consequences*, A COPY OF THE DIVINE MIND. Therefore God concerts his Measures for the Government both of the Natural and Moral World — not with a View to what *may* or *may not* happen, but — with a
View

View to what he certainly knows *will* Chap.XII.
 happen. Hence, though we may rea-
 ably enough ask this Question of any
Human, or of any other *finite* and *fallible*
 Agent — what would he have done, in
 case *this* or *that* had fallen out *so* or *so*?
 Still, there *never can* be room for any
 such Question with respect to the Deity;
 for had there been room for it, he had
 not been God: The very Supposition of
any Thing being contingent as to him,
 being inconsistent with the Nature of the
 Deity, who can have no Occasion for *ifs*
 and *ands* in his Councils. In short, the
 Absurdity of putting any such Questions,
 or making any such Objections, in Re-
 gard to any of the divine Dispensations,
 will best appear, by the following *Quære*;
 which is a Parallel Piece of Nonsense, that
 exposes the Absurdity of them, beyond
 all the sober Reasoning in the World.
 “ In what Manner, d’ye think, that Be-
 “ ing would act, under a Disappointment,
 “ who is incapable of acting under *any*
 “ Disappointment at all?” The Applica-
 tion of this, to the subject Matter of this
fourth Objection, is too obvious to be in-
 fisted

Chap. XII. fisted on. Proceed we therefore now to the fifth Objection: The Purport of which is, that “ it seems very strange that the “ Scriptures should no where remove this “ Rock of Offence, by giving us a plain “ and clear *Rationale* of it, in due Form.

§ 28.
5th Objection
answered,
why not solv-
ed in Scrip-
ture.

I answer. That holy Spirit which in-
dited the Scriptures, does not usually give
us formal *Rationales* of any of God's Dis-
pensations. It relates things, in such a
Manner, as shall easily and naturally *lead*
a Man into a *Rationale*, but it seldom
clears up a Difficulty, by a *Rationale* in
due Form: And that too, for Reasons
evidently sufficient, and all of them as e-
vidently applicable to the Point before us.
For, *first*, such *Rationales* had been abso-
lutely *impracticable*, had they been ever so
adviseable. And, *secondly*, they had been
absolutely *unadviseable*, had they been
ever so *practicable*. They had been *im-*
practicable, for Want of an equal, and
sufficient Capacity in the *Recipients*. For,
as all Readers of Scripture have an equal
Right to be let into the Solution of each
Difficulty,

1st, Because
such Soluti-
ons endless.

Difficulty, 'tis evident there are hundreds of Instances, in which *this* could not have been done, without a previously inspired Knowledge, of the whole Round of Arts and Sciences: Which is a wild, crazy, and extravagant Scheme, equally *unfit* and *impossible* to be put in Practice. I will only instance in three plain Historical Facts;—" the Descent of Mankind from " one common Stock;—the general De- " luge; — and the stocking the Earth " with Land Animals." Let a Man only fit down and compute the Number of *Modern* Arts and Sciences it requires, either to *find out*,—or even *comprehend* when found out to his Hand *by others*,—the Solution of each of the Difficulties, attending on each of these Facts. To shew, first, whence it is that the Issue of two common Parents are divided into *Whites* and *Blacks*; and why these again should be sub-divided, — the former into *Whites* and *Copper-coloured*, and the latter into the *Flat-nosed* and *Wool-pated* Negroes; while another Sort of them (who were the ancient Inhabitants of some *East Indian* Islands,

Chap.XII.

Chap. XII. Islands) are *long Haired* and *European*
 § 28. *Featured*.* Let him thence pass on to
 the efficient Causes of the Flood, and the
 natural

* This great Difficulty has at last been solved by a modern Discovery ; which clearly proves, that the different Complexions of the different Sons of *Noah*, may be occasioned by Difference of Climate, Air, Food, Water, or other natural Causes. The Abode of our *Europeans* in *Africa*, was never long enough to try the Experiment. Our Commerce with the *Blacks* has been hardly of three hundred Years standing ; and that has been in Forts and Factories, from whence the same People return home, and are succeeded by a new Sett who do the same. Whereas, 'tis otherwise with the Jews of *Cochin*, a *Dutch* Factory on the Coast of *Malabar*, who date their Settlement in the *Indies*, from the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity. And they have a Right to be believed. For we learn from *Esther*, Chap. i. 1. that the *Babylonish* Empire extended itself into *Indostan* ; that is — the Seat of the *Hindoos*, or ancient *Indi* ; called so from *Hoddu*, the Hebrew Name for *Indostan* ; for they who have ever so little dabbled in the Eastern Languages, know first, that the *Persians* and *Moors* of *Indostan*, confound all their Vowels in the Pronunciation ; and secondly, that when they adopt Hebrew Words, they turn the Hebrew *Dagesh*, or doubling Point, into a Nûn. Hence *Hondu* or *Hindu* for *Hoddu*. Well then, these Jews of *Cochin* might easily straggle into *India*. And accordingly they are now grown as black as the other *Malabars*, who are hardly a Shade lighter than those of *Guinea*,
Benin,

natural Possibility of it. And lastly, let him shew, how each Part of the habitable

Chap. XII.
§ 28.

Benin, or Angola. Now, the Jews being naturally as fair as Europeans, 'tis plain the Blackness of the *Cochin* Jews, must be owing to an Abode there of more than two thousand two hundred Years. The Changes wrought upon the Bodies of Brute Animals, are more generally known, because more suddenly wrought. I saw a Sheep, a Year or two ago, (the Property of my worthy and ingenious Friend, Capt. *Willyams*, of *Plaistow* in *Essex*) that was brought over from the Country bordering upon the further Parts of *Ethiopia*. When it came first into *England*, it was covered with a coarse Kind of strait Hair, like that of a Camel. But after a Year's Feed upon *English* Grass, we discovered very fine large Flocks of Wool, breaking out, in all Parts of its Body, through the old hairy Tegument. A clear Proof, that Air, Food, or Climate, can work great Changes upon Animal Bodies. I wrote over to the Coast of *Malabar*, to know what Tradition the *Jews* have retained, as to the Time of their Settlement at *Cochin*, but had no satisfactory Answer. *Ezekiel*, the *Rabbin* of the Synagogue, did indeed, send me a Transcript of their famous Copper Plate, hung up in their Synagogue. 'Tis written in the *Malabar* Language, put into common *Hebrew* Characters, interlined with a literal Version in *Hebrew*; with a *Hebrew* Paraphrase upon that literal Version. But I can find no Date of their Settlement there; only a Grant from a *Malabar* Prince (called *Shirin* Perimal, *i. e.* Prince *Shirin*) to allow them to settle there, with certain Privileges.

Chap. XII. table Globe was supplied with Land Animals; and particularly how each Island, in hot Latitudes, was first stocked with *Snakes, Scorpions, Centipes*, and such other noxious Creatures, as no Man would chuse to carry thither with Design. I say, let a Man only sit down and compute what Skill in *Astronomy, Geography, Navigation, History, Anatomy, Optics, Physic, Surgery, &c.* it shall require, barely to *comprehend*, much more to *discover*, the Solution of any of these; and then let him consider, with how many *more* Difficulties, of various Sorts, a Book of so *Miscellaneous* a Nature as *the Bible*, must abound; and he will then, perhaps, no longer think it strange, that the Scripture does not contain such *Rationales* as shall be *equally* adapted, to *every* Capacity, in *every* Age of the World.

§ 29.
zdly, *Each*
may be End-
less.

Besides; it generally happens, that in order to explain a Difficulty, there is such a Concatenation of *Causes*, and Springs of Action to be laid open, as shall necessarily lead us into a new Sett of Difficulties, still greater and more numerous, than
that

that single one which we first looked into : Chap.XII.
 And each of these, again, may be connected with others of a Nature yet more difficult and abstruse ; and in many Cases, it is hard to say *where* this Chain of Causes may *end*, or to how *high* a Link in the Chain of Beings it may reach up. The Man who should attempt to explain any curious natural *Phænomenon*, or nice *Metaphysical* Point, to an *American* Savage ; will readily comprehend my Meaning, as well as assent to the Truth of the Observation. For, in order to explain any such Point to such an one, the Savage must first be let into every Branch of Knowledge previously necessary to enlighten it ; all which shall puzzle and confound *him*, as much or more than the first Point of Enquiry did : And so on perhaps, 'till you have made him Master of the whole Field of Arts and Sciences. Now, what that *Savage* is, to a polite, learned, and acute *European* ; just such may the *European* be, to Spirits of superior Rank to Man : And to whom the most abstruse Mysteries in Scripture, may be as obvious, plain and clear, as any ordinary Object of human

Q

Science

Chap. XII. Science is *to us*. Upon the whole therefore, it was absolutely impracticable, for the Scriptures to deal professedly in *Rationales*.

§ 30.
Such Solutions not expedient, tho' possible.

But, *secondly*, this Task had been absolutely *unadvisable*, had it been *ever* so *easy* and *practicable*. For, as it was on many Accounts proper, that the first Conveyers of Christian Revelation should be illiterate, plain, and ignorant Persons, *as certainly they were*, so far forth as they were not inspired; so, it was infinitely for the Credit of the Cause they espoused, that neither they, nor their Successors for some Ages, should know the *whole* Strength of it; but that the Rationality, Truth, and Fitness of the System, should gradually more and more clearly appear, as every Branch of Knowledge should, by Degrees, be improved. For from hence two Points of the utmost Consequence are clearly evinced; first, negatively, that such a System could be no *Human Contrivance*, since, had it been such, its *earliest* Professors had *best* understood its Strength, and been its *ablest* Advocates; Which, that they

they were not, is a Point that few, I trust, Chap.XII.
will *now a Days* gainsay.

Then again, positively, — since every Improvement made in the Sciences, and every Discovery in every Branch of Human Learning, tends to throw new Light upon *some* Part of the Christian System; and serves to clear up Points, that before were not altogether so plain; — this is a certain and undoubted Proof of its divine Original: Since the more Light you cast upon *Truth*, the brighter it always shines; while the same shall naturally and necessarily tend, to the detecting and exposing of all Fraud and Imposture. 'Twas therefore far more expedient to leave the Discovery of *Rationales* to the Industry and Sagacity of future Ages; not only because such gradual Discoveries do the highest Honour to the Faith of Christ, but also because they are of Use to refresh the Faith of Believers, in those different Ages in which they shall be discovered: Since an old Difficulty or Objection, once surmounted, is tantamount to a new *positive* Argument. And lastly, because the clear-

§ 31.
Gradual Solutions better.

Chap. XII. ing up of all abstruse and difficult Points, must of Necessity keep Pace with that Improvement in human Science, Learning and Knowledge, which, for many Reasons, always *has* been, and always *must* be, gradual and slow. We may conclude, therefore, that it was equally *unadvisable* and *impracticable*, for the Scriptures to abound in professed *Rationales*.^{*} And as to the Doctrine of *Original Sin* in particular, — what has been said is strictly applicable to *that*; since it is but of late Years, that many Errors have been detected, old Prejudices rooted out, and many great and useful Discoveries made, not only in Respect to human Science, but also in
 Regard

^{*} What I have been observing here, was, many Years since, committed to Writing. And I just now have the Pleasure to find myself *thus* seconded by the incomparable Mr. Charles, in his Book on the Dispersion at Babel. Pref. p. xiv. *When once we consider the divine Original of these Writings, we cannot doubt but that there are many Obscurities in them which must needs be exceedingly delicate. These Obscurities, when curiously investigated, turn out all-shining Brightnesses; like new Stars, they make their Appearance in the glorious Galaxy of Revelation, and shew the infinite Wisdom of their great Creator.*

Regard to the rational Interpretation of Chap.XII. Scripture ; all which were previously necessary, more or less, to a right Understanding of that most important Dispensation, THE FALL OF MAN. We may conclude, therefore, that the Scriptures not having given us a formal *Rationale* of *Original Sin*, is no Kind of Objection, either to the Scriptures, or, to the Possibility of the Things being done ; much less — to any such Solution of this Difficulty, as shall be *consonant* to Reason, and *not contradictory* to Scripture Rationally explained ; which 'tis humbly hoped, is the Case of the *Rationale* here offered to the public View.

As to the *sixth* Objection, drawn from the Case of Infants, who are saved without any previous State of Probation here in this Life, — I answer. The Premises, as above stated in the Objection, are all of them most readily and cheerfully granted ; but the Consequence drawn from them, to invalidate the *Rationale* of Original Sin, is as strongly denied. That baptized Infants *certainly*

§ 32.
6th Objection from the Case of Infants answered.

Q 3

will

Chap. XII. will be saved, and that 'tis in the highest
 § 32. Degree probable (for more we cannot
 say) that even *unbaptized* Infants too,
 will, some how or other, be also made
 happy, through God's uncovenanted Mer-
 cies, — I am well persuaded. But if you
 proceed to ask me, by *what especial Means*
 God will bring either of these to Happi-
 ness, I shall chuse to answer you in the
 Words of the incomparable *Chillingworth*.
 That “ it doth not appear to me, any way
 “ necessary to Salvation (*no, nor to my*
 “ Rationale *neither*) to hold the Truth,
 “ or not to hold an Error, touching the
 “ Condition of these [unbaptized] In-
 “ fants. This is certain, and we must
 “ believe, that God will not deal un-
 “ justly with them, but how in particu-
 “ lar he will deal with them concerns
 “ not us, and therefore we need not
 “ much regard it.” In the mean Time,
 thus much is plain and undeniable how-
 ever; that *Adults* and *Infants* can never
 be brought to Happiness by the *same*
Means; though by *similar* Means perhaps
 they may. For Adults, we know, are
 to be made happy, only by a Course of
 Evangelical

Evangelical Faith and Practice, *here in* Chap. XII.
this Life. This Faith and Practice can § 32.
 be attained only by *Revelation*; and as
 Revelation is properly a *Rational Address*
from the Creator to his Rational Creatures,
 for such and such Purposes; — it can
 therefore be no Address at all to *Infants*,
 because they have not yet attained to the
 Use of their Rational Faculties. Of course
 then, God's Wisdom must take some *o-*
ther Method, than he has done with us
 Adults, to bring *them* to the ultimate Per-
 fection of *their* Nature. But what that
 particular Method will be, we know not;
 because 'tis not revealed to us. And
 with all due Reverence to the Supreme
 Being be it spoken, perhaps, it *ought not* to
 be revealed to us; because 'tis plainly
 supposed in the very Question itself, that
 it can never concern us to know it. For
 though it might perhaps serve to clear
 up a speculative Difficulty, yet I hope
 enough has been just now said, under the
 last Objection, to evince, that as the
 Scriptures *do not*, so neither *could they*, nor
ought they, to have abounded with such
Rationales, or Solutions of Difficulties, as

Chap. XII. the *Wit* (or rather the Ignorance, Caprice, and Wantonness) of Mankind might be apt to demand at every Turn.

§ 33.
 Infants, Ide-
 ots, &c. ano-
 malous Devi-
 ations from
 God's gene-
 ral Rules.

But to come closer to the Point. 'Tis evident that in the whole Scheme of Revelation, God Almighty, according to his usual Manner of acting in other Cases, acts by *general* and not by *particular* Laws or Rules. Yet 'tis certain, that those Rules, *general* as they are, do still admit of some Exceptions, which in the Language of Grammarians, may be stiled *Heteroclites*, or Anomalous Deviations from such Rules. Accordingly, in that Address to Mankind which we stile Revelation, all *Infants* and *Ideots* in general, as well as *Lunatics* in great Measure; and all such as, without their own Fault, labour under invincible Ignorance, for Want of the ordinary Means of Information; all these, I say, are plain and evident Exceptions to God's general Rule: And Persons so circumstanced, were never intended to be the Subjects, or Recipients of Revelation, because they are, by the very Act and Deed of God himself, rendered absolutely

absolutely incapable of it. And yet, we see, that Christian Faith and Practice, are notwithstanding, every where in Scripture prescribed, as absolutely and generally necessary to the Salvation of *all* Men, without any one express Exception to the contrary. Hence you may clearly see, that whatever Objections arise against the present Solution of original Sin, from these *Anomalous* Cases of Infants, Ideots, &c. the same hold equally good against the whole Scheme of Christian Revelation, which must *ever* be involved in the same common Difficulties; if such they deserve to be called. Consequently, such Objections prove too much, and are of course to be over-ruled as proving just nothing at all: Because the Divinity of this Revelation does still rest upon the strictest moral Demonstration, notwithstanding all that can be objected to it.

Chap. XII.
Yet these not
expressly ex-
cepted in
Scripture.

The plain Truth of the Matter is this; that in all Cases of this Sort, wherein Scripture is, and as you see, *must* be silent; 'tis our highest Act of Wisdom to be content to give Credit to those Attributes

§ 34.
These Cases
to be solved
by God's na-
tural Attri-
butes.

Chap. XII. butes of the Deity, which are so plainly discoverable by the Light of natural Reason: Such as his Wisdom, Justice, Goodness and Power. And those Attributes will always enable the Deity, to extricate himself with Ease, out of all those Difficulties, under which *any* of his Dispensations may *seem to us* to labour. Thus for Instance: Had the World been still ignorant of the Christian Scheme, the Difficulty of reconciling God's Goodness and Mercy, to his Justice and Wisdom, in the Case of human Sins and Transgressions, even though *repented of*, this Difficulty I say, had been absolutely insuperable, and enough to overset the whole Scheme of natural Religion.* But how easily are those Attributes reconciled to common Sense and Reason, as well as to one another, by the Revelation of the *Trinity*, and of the *Mediation* and *Atonement* of God the Son! And why should we not readily give so much Credit to the divine Attributes, as to take it for granted, that God can take as good Care, to provide

See Chap. VIII. § 29.

vide for the future Happiness of Infants, Chap.XII.
 &c. consistently with the Christian Scheme,
 —though the *Manner* of that Provision be
 not revealed to *us*, as having no Concern
 to know it. For pray,—why should not
 the same Wisdom, Goodness and Power,
 that enables the Deity to obviate a greater
 Difficulty, enable him as well to sur-
 mount a smaller?

I say a *smaller*; for though all Guesses
 in this Case, can be but vain and useless;
 still, any Man, though but of an ordinary
 Capacity, may easily offer *Possibilities*, and
 even *Probabilities* enough. Especially as
 Infants and Ideots are supposed in the very
 Question, to be removed into the other
 State, *before* their Souls can have received
 any Contamination from those bad Habits,
 which are the ordinary Consequences of a
 Will depraved by original Sin. Who
 knows, for Instance, but that by the In-
 strumentality either of good Angels, or of
 human Spirits departed and glorified; such
 Persons may, in the other State, be gra-
 dually informed of,—and gradually train-
 ed up into such a Way of thinking,—into
 such

§ 35.
 Conjectures
 useless here.

One Conjec-
 ture however
 offered.

2m

Chap. XII. such a Notion of the Christian Scheme, touching the Atonement and Intercession of the Redeemer, — into such an Acquaintance with the Case of fallen Angels, and fallen Men, — and consequently, into such a Course of moral Habits, as shall be tantamount to a previous State of Probation here upon Earth? And if this, or something like it, should chance to be the *real* Case, then, that very general and very strong Expression of St. *Peter* in the *Acts*, as well as all the other numerous Texts of Scripture, of like general Import, will be exactly and literally verified; that “there is none other Name* under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, but the Name of *Jesus Christ* of *Nazareth*.” *Acts* iv. v. 10 and 12. But these, and many more that might with Ease be added, are only bare Conjectures; and therefore, I rest my Answer to the Objection, on what has been said in the foregoing Sections; and conclude, that as this Objection is both unreasonable

* *Name*, here, is a common *Hebraism* for the Thing or Person named: So that the true Meaning of the Text in modern Language, is, — that Salvation can be obtained only *through the Means* of *Jesus Christ*.

unreasonable in itself, as being so easily solved by very probable Suppositions, which is all we can recur to, in Cases where the Scripture is silent, — and as it equally affects the whole Scheme of Revelation, and consequently proves too much, — it ought to be over-ruled, as of no Weight at all, against the present *Rationale* of Original Sin. Chap.XII.

Seventhly and lastly. It may be objected, that in some of our Saviour's Parables, the contrary Doctrine seems to be inculcated, or at least *implied*. Particularly in the Parable of the *Labourers*, who were called into the Vinyard, at different Hours of the Day, but were all equally rewarded : As also in that of the *Prodigal Son*, who met with so kind a Reception from his Father. In both which Cases, no Regard seems to be had, to that long Series of virtuous Habits, which were persevered in on one Side ; nor to those evil Habits of Sin, which are here supposed to be contracted on the other Side. It being plain, that in both these Cases, the divine Favour seems to be annexed wholly

§ 36.
7th Objection. Parables of *Labourers* and *Prodigal*.

Chap. XIII. wholly to the Act of *final Repentance*, how late soever it comes. I answer that *neither* of these Parables does at all concern the Question in Hand. And as there is, perhaps, no Part of Scripture, so wretchedly misinterpreted, mangled and perverted, from the original Scope and Intention, as some of the Parables are; I shall stop short here, and carry my Reader into that spacious and most noble Field, the Parables of our Lord. I shall therefore proceed to discuss some of the principal and most difficult of them: And if we can but cleanse *them* from the Rubbish and false Gloss of Antiquity, they will prove an easy Introduction to the Sense of all the others.

C H A P. XIII.

Concerning the Parables of our Lord.

§ I.
Parables generally mis-
understood.

TIS generally supposed, that the main Drift of the *Parables*, is, to inculcate Morality, or a holy Life. But this, in most Instances, is a great Mistake. And 'tis always a dangerous Solecism, or
Blunder

Blunder in Divinity, to deduce even *sound* Chap.XIII.
Doctrine from a *wrong* Text. The ill
Consequence of this, in our present Case,
is flagrant: For if the two Parables of
the *Labourers* and the *Prodigal*, are
to be at all looked upon as Moral Dis-
courses, they must of course inculcate the
most pernicious of all Immorality, by en-
couraging Men to lead a Life of Wicked-
ness, in hopes of cancelling all, at last,
by a long delayed, or Death-bed Repent-
ance: which is only a nonsensical Term,
for a Death-bed Sorrow. Nay, a Death-
bed Repentance, is a Contradiction in
Terms. For, if true Repentance consists
in a total Alteration of a Man's moral
Conduct, and a contracting such a new
Sett of Inclinations, Habits, and Affecti-
ons, as resemble a *new Nature*, and is
therefore most beautifully stiled in Scrip-
ture *a New Birth*; if this be true Re-
pentance (and sure I am, the Scripture
knows no other) — why then, a Death-
bed Repentance must be much the same
Thing, as a Death-bed Change of a
Man's whole Course of his future Life
and Conduct! In a Word, 'tis stark star-
ing

Chap. XIII. ing Nonsense.* Nay, according to this way of treating these two Parables, it will follow, that repenting Profligates will stand a better Chance hereafter, than they who have constantly persevered in all religious Duties. A Proposition so contrary to common Sense, as well as to the whole Tenor of Scripture ; that no Man surely can mistake it for sound Divinity. No. These two Parables have quite another Sense. They are not moral *Discourses*, but PROPHECIES ; that foretell the different Reception of the Gospel, from *Jews* and *Gentiles* ; and some few Divines have found it out ; only they have spoiled all, by mixing Morality with them. We read, that the Stubbornness and Stupidity of the *Jews*, made dark Parables necessary. For as our Lord was to be rejected and crucified, by those to whom he personally addressed himself, it was no more than a proper *Salvo* of his divine Commission, to tell before hand, who *would* and who *would not* receive his Doctrine, as also the true Motives of those who should

Particularly
the Labour-
ers and Pro-
digal.

* For I fear I might rather make some too easy Concessions, in Chap. viii. § 3.

should reject it. This makes the Parables Chap. XIII, a most noble Confirmation of his divine Commission, as they are Prophecies that will be more and more fulfilling to the End of Time.

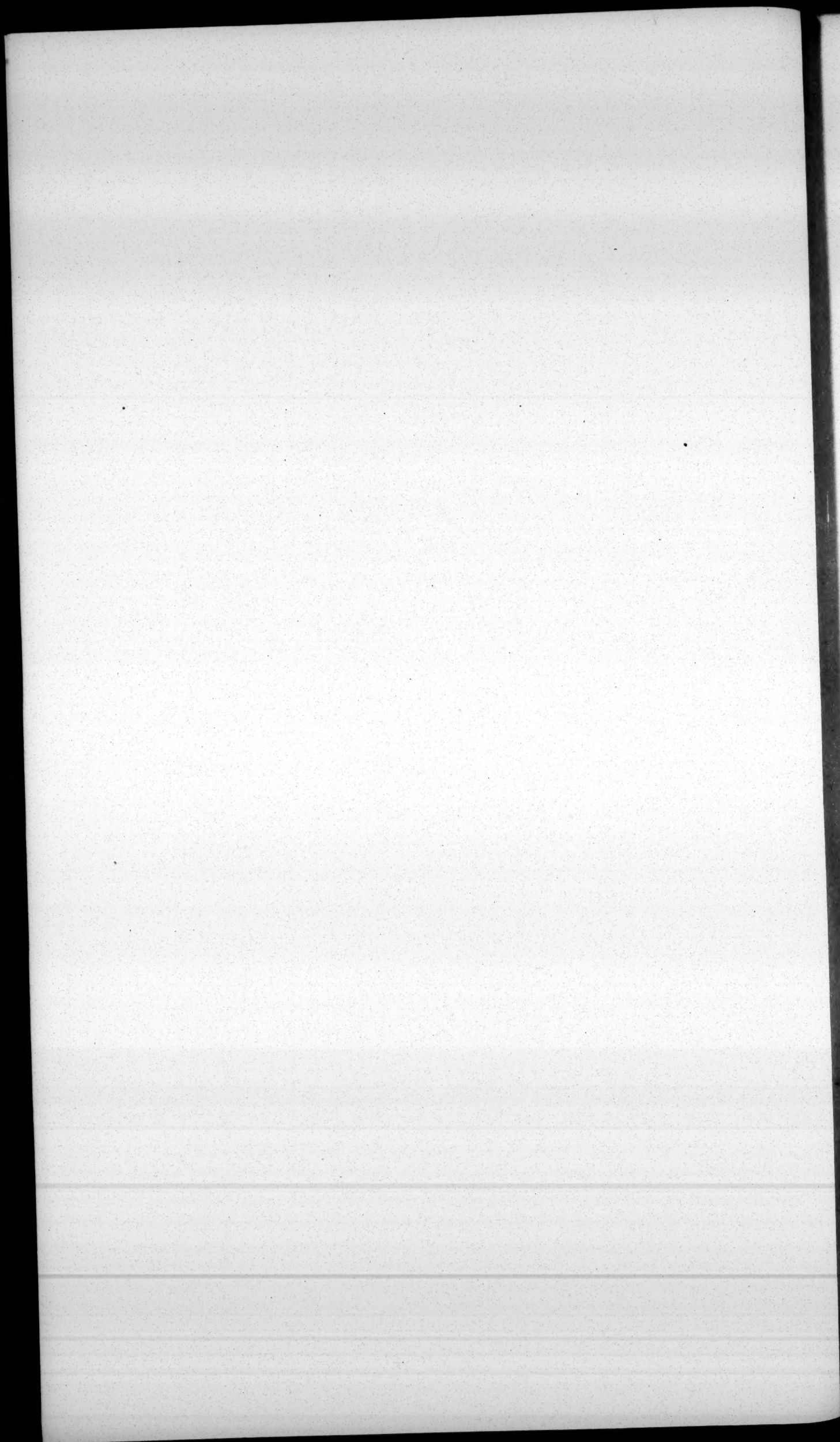
But let us first get a clear Notion of what a Scripture Parable is. I define it, then, to be "some divine Truth, conveyed through the Channel of such fictitious Events, as may be supposed to have occurred in common Life." It differs from a Fable in *Esop* or *Phædrus*, in this. "A Fable is couched under such *fictitious* Events, as happened among Brutes or Vegetables, endowed with Reason and Speech." I suppose each to consist of two Parts, *Moral* and *Machinery*. The *Moral* is, "the Doctrine or Fact tacitly understood." The *Machinery* is, "the fictitious History that conveys the *Moral*, the better to imprint it on the Attention, Fancy and Memory." A Scripture Allegory differs from both these, in being "a true and real historical Fact, but recorded chiefly to foretell such Events, in the great
R " Scheme

§ 2.
A Parable
defined,

*The parables
& Esop's fables
compared*

Chap. XIII. " Scheme of Redemption, as should resemble the historical Facts thus *allegorized*."* Come we now then, to take a View of that perplexed and blundering Account of the Parables, which makes them a mere Rope of Sand, — unconnected with Premises or Conclusion ; — with Text or Context ; — as Digressions not only *impertinent*, but also *immoral* into the Bargain ; and destructive of the whole Tenor of Scripture in general. Have Patience, good Reader, with my Heat ; till you see how I make good this heavy Charge, in what follows. As

* Agreeable to this Observation of the excellent Mr. Charles. " The Writings of the sacred Prophets are — of a Design beyond all natural Possibility of human Imitation. Like the infinite Mind that did ordain them, they many times pervade and look thro' the whole. They make Use of *one* Part of God's Dispensations, to foreshew another ; and whilst they are recording of past Transactions, they are foretelling of future Events." Charles *on the Dispersion at Babel*, p. 274. I presume that the Reason why our Infidel Writers are such utter Strangers to these Modes of divine Revelation, is, because, instead of looking into their Bibles for 'em, they searched *Quintilian* I suppose. But they may pore their Eyes out, before they will ever catch either *Jupiter* or *Apollo* at using *Tropes* and *Figures* of this Kind.



As to the Parable of the Labourers, Chap. XIII. called into the Vineyard at different Hours of the Day, — it *can* relate only to different Nations, to whom the Gospel should be tendered and promulgated, in different Ages of the World. And where is the Injustice of supposing the Christians of *late* converted Nations, to be each as happy in Heaven, as they whose Ancestors were converted a thousand or twelve hundred Years before? Why should not a pious *Mohawk, Cherokee, or Malabar Brabmin*, who was called into the Vineyard in 1766, be as happy hereafter, as a pious *Englishman*, whose Ancestors were converted at *Canterbury*, in the Year 596? None but a proud conceited Jew, who values himself more upon the *Antiquity* of his Faith, than the *Practice* of it, can think that *HIS Eye is evil, because OURS is good; as the Lord of the Vineyard* tells them; who well knew what a Rock of Offence this Dispensation would prove, to that perverse and cross-grained People.

§ 3.
The Labourers, who.

Of like Import is the Parable of the Prodigal. *A certain Man* [Luke xv. 11.]

§ 4.
The Prodigal, who.

R 2

had

Chap. XIII. *had two Sons.* [the Jew and the Gentile]

§ 4. *The younger* [the Gentile] *took his Portion of Goods,* [his Share of such divine Knowledge, as the Patriarchal Dispensation helped him to] *and took his Journey into a far Country.* Departing far from the Scene of divine Revelation, where the true Religion was professed and practiced; to colonize the distant Regions of the Globe. *And there he wasted his Substance;* that Share of Patriarchal Revelation,* which he had received from Tradition. *And there arose a mighty Famine, in that Land of Heathenism.* A Famine of the Word of God, according to the Rules of Prophetic Language. *And he would fain have fed upon the Food of Swine;* by taking up with Idolatry, rather than *no Religion* at all: And, for Want of the sure Guide of Revelation, having recourse to the uncertain Reasonings, and the vain and false Guesses of Heathen Philosophy. At length, tired of all this Nonsense, and
 sensible

* For by *Patriarchal* Revelation, I mean, in general, such as was given to *Adam* first; and then, more at large to the Fathers of the chosen Seed; down to the Call of *Moses*, when the *Mosaic* Dispensation succeeded to the *Patriarchal* one.

sensible of his spiritual Wants, *he arises* Chap.XIII.
and goes to his Father, by becoming a § 4.
 Member of the Church of God. *His*
Father has Compassion upon him. Beats
 down the Wall of Partition between Jew
 and Gentile, and kindly receives him into
 the Pale of the Church. *Entertains him*
with the best Food of divine Revelation ; as
 also *the best Cloathing*, that is, with a
 much higher Degree of Civilization, than
 any *unconverted Nations* can conceive ;
 and of which travelling only, can give a
 true Idea. At all this, *the Elder Son*, the
 Jew, takes great Offence, as in the other
 Parable : And *refuses to partake of the En-*
tertainment, by becoming a Convert as
 well as *he* ; but still continues stubborn
 and unconverted ; excluding himself out
 of the Pale of the Church, though *the*
Father goes out and entreats him to come in,
 by laying before him those cogent Argu-
 ments, with which his own Scriptures so
 plentifully abound. And *there* the Para-
 ble leaves the sullen Jew, without telling
 us whether he ever accepted the Invita-
 tion or no ; leaving *that Point* to the sub-
 sequent Parable of *the unjust Steward*.

Chap. XIII. And this I take to be the *true*, and *the only true* Moral of these two Parables. For if you run here *at all* into common Morality, all will roll back *down-hill*, into Nonsense again.

§ 5.
Dives and Lazarus, grossly
misunder-
stood.

The same Account is to be given of the Parable of the Rich Man, and *Lazarus* the poor Beggar; which is so generally mistaken for a Moral Discourse against Luxury* and Intemperance. Why, to be sure, Intemperance is a very bad thing,
and

* As I have often observed Mens Notions of *Luxury* to be confused, vague, and indeterminate, without positively fixing what it is; I here propose a Definition, that seems to ascertain it pretty well. I define *Luxury*, then, to be such a Use, or rather Abuse, — of the Goods of Nature and Providence, as hurts either a Man's *Mind*, his *Body*, or his *Estate*. Keep clear of what comes under this Definition, and I'll defy any Man to be guilty of *Luxury*, let his Meat, Drink, or Cloathing come to what it will. For Instance. A Man that sits down to a small Plate of *Truffles* in *England* or *France*, may easily be guilty of *Luxury*; not because they are excellent Eating, but, — because in those Countries they'll stand a Man in two or three *Guineas*. But then, even the meanest Peasant in *Piedmont*, (where they are as cheap as *Potatoes* are here) may make a Meal on them, without the least Imputation
of

and we learn as much from sundry Texts Chap.XIII. of Scripture. But I'll venture to say, that we learn it from no Part of this Parable. For, it no where appears from the Parable itself, whatever it may from the vulgar Interpretation of it, — either that the *Rich* Man was damned, only for eating his Viçtuals in a cleanly Manner, and for keeping a plentiful Table : (a Sentence he had much better deserved, if he *had not* done so) nor does it appear from thence, that the *Beggar* was carried to Heaven, only for being lousy and scabby. A Situation which is usually fitter to intitle a Man to the tender Embraces of a Cat-of-nine-Tails, than to a Place in *Abraham's* Bosom. No. All we read in the Para-

R 4 ble

of Luxury ; except he over-eats himself. So again for Drink. A Bottle of *Champagne* is always Luxury here in *England*, as being an Import hurtful to the Public ; of course it hurts *every* Man's Pocket. But in Parts abroad, where 'tis as cheap as *Cyder* is here, — there can be no great Harm in it ; except either a Man gets drunk (which hurts his Mind) or gets a Fit of the Gout by it ; which hurts his Body. [Ay, and cruelly too] Or except he can't afford to pay his Reckoning ; for then he hurts his Pocket. In all which Cases, to be sure, 'tis Luxury, otherwise not.

*fine Reason
Mr. B.*

*Champagne is scarce
in some parts*

Chap. XIII. ble, is, that the one went into a State of Misery, but we are NOT TOLD WHY; nor are we told WHY the other went into a State of Happiness, but only that he *did so*. Alas, both the *Merits* of the one, and the *Demerits* of the other, were of quite another Nature than is generally supposed: And if we would fully comprehend the true and only Scope of the Parable, we must proceed upon the foregoing Plan. Only I must remind the Reader, once more, that the mere *Machinery*, or Outlines of this Parable, are plainly and visibly adapted, both to the Conceptions and the Expressions too, of the Vulgar in those Times, in which it was delivered. This is true of *all* the Parables, but more eminently of *this*. Therefore that final Scope and Drift, which I call *the Moral*, is here the only thing to be regarded. This premised, the following Key will explain the Cypher, by the Help of a little of that Prophetic Language, the Nature of which we shall more commodiously discuss hereafter.

We will suppose, then, *the Rich Man* Chap. XIII. who fared so sumptuously, to be the Jew; so § 6. amply enriched with the heavenly Treasure of divine Revelation. *The poor Beggar, who lay at his Gate*, in so miserable a Plight, was the poor Gentile; now reduced to the *last Degree* of Want, in Regard to religious Knowledge.* *The Crums which fell from the rich Man's Table*, and which

The true Meaning of it.

* About the Time of our Lord's Incarnation, there were above thirty thousand Gods worshipped within the Limits of the *Roman Empire*. They Deified the supposed Patrons of every Kind of Vice, Filth, and Obscenity. They erected Temples to the very Gods and Goddeses of F—rt—ing and Stinking. And from hence came, undoubtedly, the Custom of the *Moravians*, of f—rt—ng into one anothers Tea-cups, at their Love-Fests. See, for my Authority, the sixty-second Page, of a Book called *The Moravians compared and detected*. London; Printed for J. and P. Knapton, 1755. A fine Religion this, for the Ladies. For all Ladies, whether Widows, Wives, or Spinsters, who profess the *Moravian Faith*, must, it seems, by the very Principles of their Religion, be all of them supinely submissive to the Service of that God, that was formerly so devoutly worshipped at *Lampsacus*. Well might that neat and cleanly People, the *Dutch*, spew up these detestable Wretches, who are a Shame and Reproach to human Nature. No lucrative Views could bribe the *Dutch* to harbour them: And I hope
this

Chap. XIII. which the Beggar was *so desirous of picking up*, were such Fragments of Patriarchal and Jewish Tradition, as their travelling Philosophers were able to pick up, with their utmost Care and Diligence. And those Philosophers were also the *Dogs that licked the Sores* of Heathenism, and endeavoured to supply the want of divine Revelation, by such Schemes and *Hypotheses* concerning the Nature of the Gods, and the Obligation

this Nation will, from hence forward, be ashamed of accusing the *Dutch* of being capable of doing *any thing* for filthy Lucre. The whole Religious System, of these *amazing Creatures* — is neither more nor less than a Mass of the most horrid *Blasphemy, Ignorance, Nonsense* and *Obscenity*. But, no Matter for all that. They pretended, I think, to bring over some Manufacture, or other; and so — honest old *England* received them with open Arms. 'Twas well for them it happened so; for if *we* had rejected them, they would have been troubled to have found an *Asylum* any where else but in the Jaws of Hell. Wondrous Hospitality this! Well may it make us, (in *THIS* Respect) the Jest of all *Christendom*. Accordingly, *Monf. Rousseau*, that *Paragon* of all Infidels (lately hissed over into *England*, from out of *Switzerland*) laughs at our ridiculous Lenity to such a Degree, that he can't hold his Water. And this, I suppose, is the true Reason of his wearing an *Armenian Habit*: For the Convenience, as I am told, of carrying a spare Bladder under his Vest.

ligation of Moral Duties, as (due Al- Chap.XIII.
lowance made for their Ignorance and § 6.
Human Frailties) did no small Honour
to Human Nature, and yet thereby plain-
ly shewed, how little a way unassisted
Reason could go, without some superna-
tural Help; as one of the wisest of them
frankly confessed. About one and the
same Time, *the Beggar dies, and is carried*
*by the Angels, i.e. (God's spiritual Messengers**
to Mankind) into Abraham's Bosom; that
is, — he is engrafted into the Church of
God. *And the rich Man also dies and is*
buried. He dies what we call a political
Death. His Dispensation ceases. He is
rejected from being any longer the pecu-
liar Son of God. The People whom he
parabolically represents, are miserably de-
stroyed by the *Romans*, and the wretched
Remains of them driven into Exile over
the Face of the Earth: Mere Vagabonds,
with a kind of a Mark set upon them,
like *Cain their Prototype*, † for a like
Crime; and which Mark may perhaps
be — their Adherence to the Law.

Whereby

* The Greek Word *Angel* signifies in *English* a
Messenger.

† *Gen. iv. 5.*

Chap. XIII. Whereby it comes amazingly to pass, that
§ 6. these People, though dispersed, yet still dwell alone and separate; *not being reckoned among the Nations*, as *Balaam* foretold. The Rich Man being reduced to this State of Misery, complains bitterly of his hard Fate; but is told by *Abraham*, that he slipped his Opportunity, while *Lazarus* laid hold on *his*, and now receives the Comfort of it. The Jew complains of the Want of more Evidence, to convince his Countrymen, *the five Brethren*: And would fain have *Lazarus* sent from the Dead to convert them. But *Abraham* tells him, that *if their own Scriptures cannot convince them of their Error, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the Dead*. And exactly so it proved in the Event. For, this Parable was delivered towards the End of the third Year of our Lord's Ministry; and in the fourth, or following Year of it, the Words put into the Mouth of *Abraham*, as the Conclusion of the Parable, are most literally verified, by our Lord's raising another *Lazarus* from the Dead. And we may presume, that the Beggar had the fictitious Name of *Lazarus* given him

him in the Parable, not without some Reason : Since the supposed Request of the rich Man, was fully answered, by our Lord's raising another, and a *real Lazarus*, from the Dead. But what was the Consequence? Did this NOTORIOUS Miracle convince the rich Man's Brethren? No, truly. His Visit to them from the Dead, was so far from convincing them, that they actually *consulted together, * that they might put Lazarus also to Death; because that by Reason of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus. †* So much for the true Sense of this Parable. But I have not done yet. For,

'Tis

* *John xii. v. 10, 11.*

† As I have here confined the Sense of the Parable *wholly* to the State of the Jew and Gentile, here in this Life, I am sensible that this Interpretation must give Offence to many; since most undoubtedly, the Machinery of the Parable is visibly adapted to vulgar Apprehensions concerning the Future State. But then, this is, at Bottom, no more than a Prejudice received in our Infant Days; when we used to admire the pretty Pictures of *Abraham* and *Lazarus*, sitting together, perched upon the Top of a Cloud; with the rich Man sprawling in a great Fire below. For in Reality, according to the Rules of *Parable Language*, the being

carried

Chap. XIII.

§ 7.

Its Connection with foregoing Parable.

'Tis further remarkable, that the three Verses in the xvth of *St. Luke* [the 16th, 17th, and 18th] which connect this Parable with the foregoing one of *the unjust Steward*, are a Kind of a Key to the Whole, and a strong Confirmation of the foregoing Interpretation. V. 16. *The Law and the Prophets were until John: says our Lord. That is, the Mosaic Oeconomy ended, and the Christian Dispensation commenced, at the Time when our Lord was inaugurated into his Ministerial Office, by St. John Baptist. For since that Time, or from that Time forwards, the Kingdom of God, or Christianity, is preached; a Dispensation under which*

every carried into *Abraham's Bosom*, is no more than the being engrafted into the true Church, according to the plain and obvious Sense of *Matthew iii. 9.* And accordingly the Parable nowhere says, that *Lazarus* was carried into *Heaven*, — but into *Abraham's Bosom*, as before interpreted. Nay, had the Parable expressly said he was carried into *Heaven*, little would have been gained: Since the Profession of Christianity here upon Earth, is called in Scripture — *the Kingdom of Heaven*; as being the Commencement of that State of Happiness, which though it begins here, will not be compleated till hereafter; or rather will never be compleated at all, but be growing and increasing to all Eternity.

every Man (or Men of every Nation) Chap.XIII.
presseth into it, by a ready Submission and
 Conversion: Christianity not being con-
 fined like the *Jewish* Dispensation, to one
 peculiar People only. V. 17, *And it is*
easier for Heaven and Earth to pass, than
one Tittle of the Law to fail. As much as
 to say, that God's final End and Aim, in
 giving the Law, was to make it wholly
 subservient to this last Dispensation of his
 Will to Mankind. And that therefore
 the Law was not so properly *abrogated*, as
fulfilled in the Christian Scheme. Then
 follows v. 18, a Text which has been so
 miserably murdered and misinterpreted
 by *All our Commentators*; who make *him*
who spake as never Man spake, to fly out
 all on a sudden into an impertinent Di-
 gression concerning *Adultery*. A Topic
 that has just nothing at all to do, with
 either what goes before, or what follows
 after. But, 'twas enough for our saga-
 cious Commentators, that there they saw
 the *Word* *Adultery*, whatever became of
 the *Thing* itself. The Words are,—*who-*
soever putteth away his Wife, and marrieth
another, committeth Adultery: And who-
ever

Chap. XIII. *ever marrieth her that is put away from her Husband, committeth Adultery.* A very little Aid, borrowed from *Prophetic Language*, will shew this Text to be a close Connection of our Lord's Argument. For *that Man* is guilty of Adultery, in a spiritual Sense, who puts away the true Religion (his spiritual Spouse) to *marry another*, or to wed himself to a false Religion. Hence come the Expressions so frequent in the Old Testament, of *going a whoring after Idols*,—*after Mens own Inventions*,—*of committing Fornication with Idols*, &c. &c. And this was precisely the Case of those to whom our Saviour was then directing his Discourse. For though those *Jews* were not, indeed, guilty of *Idolatry like their Ancestors*, they still lived in a State of spiritual Adultery, by remaining pertinaciously wedded to the Law of *Moses*, from which they had been legally divorced, ever since the Baptist had inaugurated our Lord into his Ministerial Office; seconded by that awful Voice from Heaven,—*This is my beloved Son, hear ye him*: Though the *Jews* thought they knew better, and would hear no body but

but *Moses*. Hence it is, that our Saviour Chap.XIII. calls those *Jews* — *a wicked and adulterous Generation*. For whoever is acquainted with the State of the neighbouring Nations in those Days, will see no extraordinary Reason, why *the Jews* should be so particularly singled out, for *literal Adultery*, more than their Heathen Neighbours. No. Their Crime, no Doubt, was that of *Spiritual Adultery*. So much for the three Verses that connect this Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, with the foregoing one of the *Unjust Steward*, which we shall shew presently, to be just of the same Import. But first,

Give me Leave to observe further, that as the *Machinery* of the Parable of the Rich Man and *Lazarus*, is evidently fictitious, without having ever had any serious and real Existence in Nature; so, of course, no Objection can be drawn from it, against that excellent Scheme, lately revived by Dr. *Law*, “ that the Soul
“ sleeps, or remains in a State of absolute
“ Insensibility, from Death to the Resur-
“ rection. So that, TO ALL INTENTS

S

AND

§ 8.

'Tis no Ob-
jection to Dr.
Law's State
of the Soul,
&c.

Chap. XIII. " AND PURPOSES, our Transition
 " will be *immediate* and *instantaneous*, from
 " Death to Judgment; let ever so many
 " Ages intervene in *Reality*: Since a per-
 " fect Insensibility, must, *in respect to US*,
 " annihilate all the intermediate Space of
 " Time; as is very evident to those who
 " know by what Means we gather our
 " Ideas of Time, as it passes while we
 " are awake, or while we sleep imper-
 " fectly." And surely, the World is
 much obliged to Dr. *Law*, for the Re-
 vival and Improvement of a Supposition,
 so consonant both to Scripture and sound
 Philosophy too. 'Tis an *Hypothesis* that
 rids Christianity of many an embarrassing
 Difficulty. 'Tis a well timed one; now
 when the Devil seems to be under an
Affiento-Contract to supply the Fools of
 this Nation with Plenty of *Popish Im-*
posters: For Dr. *Law's* Scheme cuts up
 by the Roots, all those Knavish Contri-
 vances of Popery, about Purgatory, Prayers
 to Saints, and Prayers for the Dead, &c.
 Which, in Fact, are no more than so
 many *Traps* to catch Fools and their
Money in; — Devices, for which Popery
 is

is as excellently adapted, as the Wit of Chap XIII. Man could possibly contrive. And as the Machinery of this Parable seems to furnish one of the principal Objections to Dr. *Law's* Supposition, I thought it worth while to make this Observation by the way.

After what has been said above, to rescue those Parables from Abuse, we may perhaps be able to pick out the true Meaning of one more of them, which, till very lately, did always appear *to me*, to be not only the most unaccountable of all the Parables, but also one of the most difficult Passages, to be met with, perhaps, of any in the whole Canon of Scripture. 'Tis that called the *Parable of the Unjust Steward*: And one, so difficult, that Cardinal *Cajetan*, a very learned Commentator of the Church of *Rome* (and an *honest* Man too, for he was a Friend to *Reformation*) — was so much out of Temper at this Parable, that he pronounced, in his Wrath, that it neither *could*, nor ever *would* be understood *at all*. Surely 'twas a rash Censure. But then;

§ 9.
Parable of the
unjust Stew-
ard.

Chap. XIII. — when the Infallibility of the whole *Conclave* comes to be divided into fifty-one Shares, 'tis plain, that only one fifty-first Part of it, can be *legally* claimed by each Cardinal : So that 'tis easy to think, that one of the Number might, perchance, make a Slip. But this of *Cajetan's* was a *terrible Slip* indeed ; for he had like to have pushed down the Pope himself too. For, this unluckly false Step of his, starts a crabbed and untoward Difficulty (hitherto dormant) but which, I fear, now that 'tis once *put up*, none of the mighty *Nimrods* of the Church of *Rome*, will ever be able to hunt it down again. For this good Cardinal, did not recollect, in his Heat, that the Infallibility of the Church of *Rome*, is grounded by their ablest Champions, on “ the Necessity of having
 “ Apostolical Tradition, and the true
 “ Sense of Scripture, truly and faithfully
 “ handed down to Posterity, through
 “ the infallible Channel of their own
 “ Church.” Now, as St. *Luke* had certainly some Meaning or other, in this Parable ; and which *must* have been understood by those inspired Christians, who
 were

were [*John* xvi. 13.] guided by the Holy Chap. XIII. Ghost into all Truth: We Protestants naturally ask, How comes it that the Church of Rome were such careless and Unjust Stewards of Apostolical Tradition, that one of the ablest of them all, and a Cardinal too, — was driven to confess, that the Sense of this Parable, was so far from being handed down to Posterity *at all*, that it was by that Time quite lost: Ay, and lost too beyond all Possibility of being *ever* retrieved, either by *Papal* Tradition, or by any other Means whatever? Thus, you see, that let Protestant Truth be every so carefully tied up in a Bag, though sealed even by the Pope himself; still, 'tis of so subtile and *Mercurial* a Nature, that it *will* find its way out, one time or other, in spite of Fate. And therefore nothing need damp our Courage, in searching out the true Sense, either of this, or (in God's good Time) of any other difficult Portion of Scripture. To come to the Point, then.

As this Parable is certainly very difficult; I dare not affirm positively, that I
 S 3 have

§ 10.
Cajetan's rash
 Opinion of it.

Chap. XIII. have hit the true Sense of every particular *Limb*, or Part of it; but I am satisfied in my own Mind, that I am right as to the grand *Outlines* of the general Scheme of it; because the Interpretation I am about to advance, makes one compleat and well connected Discourse, both of this xvith Chapter of St. *Luke*, and of the four foregoing ones. Whereas, upon any *other* Interpretation of it, this single Parable slips in, like an impertinent *Episode* in a Romance, both without any Reason, or any Connection with the Context. But however that may be, — I boldly maintain *this*, that the vulgar Notion of this Parable's being levelled by our Lord, against worldly Covetousness, — is diametrically opposite to Truth and common Sense. 'Tis allowed, to be sure, that Covetousness is a very bad thing; but then again, — pray what Business has a Discourse against Covetousness to do *here*, when our Lord's Discourse, for this and four Chapters before it, was quite engaged upon another Subject? We shall therefore first endeavour to clear away the Dust and Rubbish of old Commentators,
and

and *then* offer what seems to be the true Chap.XIII.
 Sense of this abstruse Portion of Scripture :
 And I hope the Profit will repay the La-
 bour. The Parable is contained in the
 first Part of the xvth of St. *Luke* ; and
 was delivered in the Hearing both of the
Disciples, and of the Pharisees. For we
 read, v. 14, *that the Pharisees also who*
were covetous, heard all these things, and
they derided him. And I suppose, that
here lies the true Cause of the Blunder.
 “ The Pharisees, the *conscious* Pharisees,
 “ cruelly suspected him to aim at *their*
 “ favourite Vice of Covetousness ; — they
 “ interpreted the Parable in that Sense ;
 “ the Evangelist himself says, that they
 “ *really did* interpret him so ; — and he
 “ *does not* apprise us, that those Phari-
 “ sees were in a Mistake.”

To this I answer ; First, — Nor does
 the Evangelist say, that “ they under-
 “ stood him right.” He only records
what they said ; without *any* Reflexions,
 good or bad, *upon what* was so said. And
 what then ? Does not another Evangelist,
 who wrote by the same Spirit of Inspiration,

§ II.
 This Parable
 misunder-
 stood, and
 why.

Chap. XIII. do just the same Thing, (*John xi. 35.*)

§ II. when *Jesus wept*, just before he proceeded to raise his Friend *Lazarus* from the Dead? Here, St. *John* only *relates*, but no way *approves* the Mistake of the Jews, who thought that he wept for the Death of his Friend *Lazarus*; and yet they were evidently mistaken, as is demonstrably plain from the first Rudiments of Common Sense. For, what Sense can there be, in supposing *him* who had just declared in (v. 4.) that *Lazarus's* *Sickness* *was not unto Death* (finally) *but for the Glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby*: What Sense, I say, can there be, in supposing *him* to weep, only because he was a going to bring his departed Friend to Life again, by the most glorious Miracle, save one, that he ever wrought? Whereas, to suppose this merciful Father of Spirits, to weep on a Foresight of that Stubbornness of the Jews, of which this great Miracle would become so *flagrant* a Proof, and of course the just Cause of so severe a Condemnation, — this was, indeed, a fit Subject of his Heroic Grief, and truly worthy of his
divine

divine Compassion. For surely there Chap.XIII.
 cannot well be, in the whole Round of § 11.
 Nature, a Sight so *truly* piteous and lamentable, as to see those flagrant Abuses of Rational Freedom, which God's Reasonable Creatures are sometimes capable of making, in regard to *Religious* Matters. And if the true Cause of our Saviour's Weeping afterwards, over the City of *Jerusalem*, which lay extended below him, as he stood upon the Heights of Mount *Olivet*; I say, if the true Cause of his weeping *then*, had not been told in *Luke* xix. 42, I don't doubt but *some* Commentators would have told us, that "well might he weep, at a Foresight of
 " what he was going to suffer in that
 " City;" when yet 'tis plain, that he wept at the Thoughts of what *that City itself* was going to suffer upon *his* Account. So that you see, that in both these Places, in *Luke* xvi. 14, as well as in *John* xi. 35, the Remarks made by the Jews, are simply related, not as being just and true; but only as Instances of the Stupidity of the Jews. And 'tis amazing, that not a *single* Commentator should

Chap. XIII. should *ever* understand such plain Passages as BOTH these are.

§ 12.
Second Reason why.

I come now, to my second and principal Objection to the vulgar Sense of this Parable; that this Interpretation of it, must be a *wrong* one, for this plain Reason;—because the *Pharisees* thought it to be the *right* one. For we are plainly told, that our Lord's Doctrines were couched under Parables, on purpose, because the Jews neither *would* nor *should* understand the true Scope of them: And I hope that this mysterious Step is fully justified in the first § of this Chapter.

§ 13.
Third Reason why.

Fourth Reason why.

Then thirdly, this Construction seems absurdly to justify the supposed Knavery of the Steward, in cheating his Master. Why, we may as well suppose the Holy Spirit to be employed in writing an *Encomium* on *Japhet Crook*, or *Ward of Hackney*. Fourthly, According to this Interpretation, the Lord of the Estate could so far resent the former Knaveries of the Steward, as to turn him quite out of his Office, and yet the very next Minute propound him as a fit Example of Wisdom

Wisdom and Prudence, to *other* Stewards or Chap.XIII.
 Attornies ; whose Sagacity seldom stands
 in need of any Hints of this kind. A *Spar-*
tan Law-giver might have done so, but
 Heavenly Wisdom certainly knows better.
 Fifthly and lastly, The *Mammon of Un-*
righteousness is here most absurdly sup-
 posed to signify Riches in general, whe-
 ther *well* or *ill* acquired, which is both
 false and absurd again. For, though
 the Learned are not agreed as to the
 Derivation of the Word ; which indeed
 is very difficult and uncertain ; yet 'tis
 on all Hands allowed, that *Mammon* fig-
 nifies Wealth or riches *simply*, without
 any *ill* Sense annexed to it. Particularly
 in the *Chaldee* or *Syriac* ; according to
 which Idiom our Saviour must be suppo-
 sed to use it, because he was delivering
 this Parable to his Hearers in *Syriac*.
 And St. *Austin*, who by the Place of his
 Birth, must needs be something of a
 Judge, assures us somewhere, that this
 Word occurred in the ancient *Punic* (a
 Kind of *Syriac*) in the Sense of *Lucrum*
 or Gain : Which may be either *well* or
ill gotten. 'Tis plain, therefore, that in
 strict Propriety of Speech, there is no *bad*
 Sense

Fifth Reason
 why.

Chap. XIII. Sense annexed to the Word itself. Nor ought there to be. For Riches in general are a great Blessing of God; and are either a *good* or a *bad* thing, as *we* think fit ourselves to make them, either by properly *using*, or *abusing* them. Nor need a Man waste Time in Proof of so plain a Truth. In a Word, there are *three* Sorts of Mammon. There is the Righteous Mammon: When it is gained either by honest Industry in some useful Calling; or by such meritorious Actions, as benefit our fellow Creatures. There is a second Sort that may be called the Mammon of Indifference. When it is gained, I mean, by such Ways as are barely innocent, and simply not sinful. And doubtless there is a third Sort, that may properly enough be called the Mammon of Unrighteousness: But I who am but a plain ordinary Man, forbear to define it, out of Respect and Deference to the superior Sagacity, Wisdom and Experience of the present Age; that abounds with so many worthy *Adepts* in it, who are better able to explain the Nature of it *to me*. I conclude, therefore, that 'tis absurd, here in this
Parable

Parable, to interpret the Words *Mammon* Chap.XIII. of *Unrighteousness*, by *Riches at large*, or, simply so called : And of course, the vulgar Sense of this Parable, is a false one.

But in order to do my best, towards investigating the *true* Sense of this very difficult Parable (which is quite a distinct Task from exploding a *false* one) I shall first lay down some previous Observations, and by them pave the Way to a Kind of Paraphrase upon the whole. First then, we'll presume, that this *Unjust Steward* was the Jew ; who did *ever* make a bad Use of the Goods committed to his Care, from the Time of Moses, down to Jesus Christ. For, though the *Babylonish* Captivity did pretty well cure him of Idolatry, yet, he found out from thence forward, another foolish Way of wasting his heavenly Goods : For by a kind of Popish Manner of Judaizing, *he made the Word of God of no Effect*, by his own foolish Traditions. And because he had stuck to the Law *too little* before, he wisely thought he never could stick to it *too much* afterwards. And this Folly brought on the
third

§ 14.
True Solution
of the Un-
just Steward.

Chap. XIII. third and principal Period of his unfaithfulness to his Charge ; — when he so stubbornly adhered to the Law, at a Time when the whole Purport and Design of that Law, might have told him, that the Law itself was at an End, and no longer of Use, since it was now *Fulfilled*, and *Abrogated* of course. Hereby verifying to a Tittle the Charge of St. *Stephen*, by *always resisting the Holy Ghost ; as their Fathers did, so did they.* Acts vii. 51. Secondly, this Transgression finally outs him of his Stewardship : And in this State he remains at present ; *unable to dig*, and yet *ashamed to beg*. I stand astonished, when I consider, how literally these two last Clauses, are, to this Day verified, on that *unhappy and discarded Steward* — the Jew ! The three principal Engines Mankind make Use of, in procuring or improving the Goods of Nature, are, — the *Plough* — the *Sail* — and the *Lomb*. The Plough is a *laborious Tool*. A Jew never sets his Hand to it. There is no such thing as a Jew Farmer. In all the Countries where they live dispersed, whether *Christian*, *Mahometan* or *Pagan*, no Jew ever exercises Agriculture.

ture. There is no such thing as a Jew Chap.XIII.
 Farmer; whatever there may be of Far- § 14.
 mers of Jewish Tempers, or Dispositions :*
 But a true and genuine Jew, always leaves
 it to the *Natives* of the Country where he
 sojourns, to dig and delve. *To dig he can-*
not. Neither, secondly, does he handle
 the Ropes, nor touch the Sail : which is
 another Occupation, both as hazardous,
 and as laborious as the Plough. He'll
 take his Passage on board, and go any
 where : But you never heard of a Jew
 Master of a Ship ; nor of a Ship navigated
 by a Jewish Crew. That's as bad as go-
 ing to Plough. He'll no more set his
 Hand to a *Sail*, than he will to a *Spade*
 or a *Plough*. As to the *Lomb*, indeed,
that's lighter Work ; he may possibly do
 something *there* ; by little light pidling
 Manufactures ; or by Brokerage, and con-
 ducting a few Imports and Exports ;
 which is all *light* Work ; but enough to
 keep him from begging. For — *to beg he*
is ashamed. And who ever met with a
 Jew Beggar, in any Country upon Earth ;
 whether *Christian, Pagan, or Mahometan,* ?
 'Tis true, they *sometimes* are greasy, and
 stink,

* See a gra-
 phical De-
 scription of
 such, in the
 Prophet *Ma-*
lachy, chap.
 iii. 8, 9, 10.

Chap. XIII. stink, and want shaving ; but yet — they *never beg*. These Particulars, about their neither *digging* nor *begging*, are enough to throw any thinking Man into a Fit of Enthusiasm ; so that I cannot prevail on myself, to refer them to the *mere Machinery* of the Parable. For surely they denote more than that the Steward was “ reduced to Distress ;” for they *plainly* point out the very Manner *how* he should behave and demean himself, *under* his Distress.

§ 15.
His Lord's
Debtor's,
who.

Thirdly, His Lord's Debtors, might be the Gentile Nations. He befriends these by *lessening their Debts* ; or, by helping them to the Rational Means of *Repentance, Conversion and Salvation*. And of course by abating the heavy Accounts, that would otherwise have been left *unsettled* between God and their own Souls. For we are carefully to remember, that 'tis usual with the Holy Ghost, in all these abstruse Kinds of Revelation, to personize *whole Bodies* of Men ; or to speak of them in their different Periods of History, as of *one Person*, in the different Periods or Ages of Life.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, By the Lord's *commending the* Chap. XIII.
Unjust Steward, I think can only be meant, § 16.
 that this wise Dispensation, or Contri- *Steward, in*
 vance, met with the divine Approbation, *what Sense*
 as much as if it had *not* been a Good *commended.*
 drawn out of a Jewish Evil; but as if it
 had been merely and simply an Effect of
 God's Wisdom alone. And so, it met
 with the divine Approbation; (like the
 Creation at first; — God saw that it was
 good) — that his Will would be fulfilled
 thereby, in Regard to the Salvation of the
 Gentiles; and therefore, he did more
 properly *suffer it to take Place*, than *cause*
it. But of this more below.

Fifthly, If Mammon signifies no more
 than simply *Riches*, as I think has been
 fully shewn; — and if *Riches* do, in the
 Prophetic Language, constantly stand for
Heavenly Riches or Knowledge; — and if
 the Prophetic Language be the Language
 of all the *other* Parables; — then, why
 not of *this*? And why should we not take
 the Word *Mammon*, *here*, as standing for
 heavenly Riches, or that Share of divine
 Revelation, which was committed to the
 T Jewish

§ 17.
Mammon ex-
plained.

Chap. XIII. Jewish Steward. Further yet. *Righteousness* and *Justification*, we know, are one and the same thing: And properly signify, the making us Right in the Sight of God. Therefore, that same *Mammon* or Wealth, which, before the Abrogation of the Law, was real heavenly Riches, as being at that Time, the only Means whereby Men could *purchase* their Peace with God, or — be justified in his Sight; — why, *this*, upon the Abrogation of the Law, ceased to be any longer a Means of Justification or Righteousness; and of course, from thence forward — became *Mammon of Unrighteousness*. That is, — it became then, the very Reverse of that Mammon, or heavenly Riches that alone could justify a Man, *before* the Repeal of the Law. By the instrumental Means of this same *Mammon*, did our Lord decree it in this Parable, that these bad Stewards were to *make themselves Friends*, or convert those Gentiles, who should one Time be a Means of converting *them*. But of this again elsewhere. These five Preliminaries being laid down, will enable me to express more easily, what seems to me to be

be the Sense of the entire Parable, in a Chap. XIII. continued Paraphrase (at least where it is *wanting* to the Text) especially if I may be allowed to be brief, upon what I have before enlarged on.

Luke xvi. v. 1. *And he said also unto his Disciples, there was a certain rich Man which had a Steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his Goods.*

§ 18.
Each Verse
paraphrased.

And this he said, not to his Disciples only, though perhaps he might seem to direct his Discourse principally to *them*; as they were to transmit this eminent Parable to Posterity: Since it is plain, by the Conclusion of it, that it was aimed principally, at the Pharisaic, or Jewish Part of our Lord's Audience.

V. 2. *And he called him, and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? give an Account of thy Stewardship: For thou mayest be no longer Steward.*

No longer a Steward of the divine Mysteries, committed heretofore to the Jewish Nation only.

V. 3. *Then the Steward said within himself, what shall I do? For my Lord taketh*

T 2

away

Chap. XIII. away from me the Stewardship: I cannot
 § 18. dig, to beg I am ashamed.

V. 4. I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the Stewardship, they may receive me into their Houses.

Meaning, in this supposed Soliloquy, that *they*, his Lord's Gentile Debtors, may, in process of Time, receive *him* also into the Church. But of this also more below.

V. 5. So he called every one of his Lord's Debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my Lord?

V. 6. And he said, an hundred Measures of Oil. And he said unto him, Take thy Bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

V. 7. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said an hundred Measures of Wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy Bill and write fourscore.

What may be meant by his abating all these Debts, we have seen above, under our third preliminary Observation.

V. 8. And the Lord commended the unjust Steward, because he had done wisely: For the Children of this World are in their Generation wiser than the Children of Light.

As

As his Lord could not be supposed to Chap. XIII.
commend him for a *fresh* Instance of his § 18.
 wasting his Goods, because he had but
 just turned him out, for the like Instances
 of Waste; we must therefore certainly
 look out for a more probable Sense. Sup-
 pose then, that his Lord's *commending*
 him, should mean only this: — That
 God (as we hinted above) *approved* of
 this kind of Oeconomy; which made the
 Untrustiness, and Unfaithfulness of the
Jew, useful or instrumental, towards the
 Repentance and Conversion of the *Gen-*
tile. And the Reason given for it, is,
because the Children of this World, are wiser
in their Generation, than the Children of
Light. Here I will suppose *the Children*
of this World to be the Jews. The *Chil-*
dren of Light to be the future Gentile
 Converts. That *the Children of this World*
 may mean the harden'd Jews of *that* Ge-
 neration, — is very certain. For though
 the Evangelists wrote in Greek, yet 'tis
 well known to all Scholars, that *their*
 Greek, is very often no more than Syriac
 or Hebrew, literally translated into Greek.
 If so, the Jews here spoken of, were no

Chap. XIII. more than the Jews of that particular
 § 18. עולם or Period of Time. *If the World hate you* (says our Lord to his Disciples, *John xv. 18.*) *ye know that it hated ME, BEFORE it hated you.** Here the Word *World* must mean the Jews, and *not* the Gentiles; and particularly the Jews of that עולם or Age. For the Gentiles had not as yet (whatever they might do afterwards) given any Proof of their *hating* Jesus, but quite the Reverse. They had given many promising Tokens, Signs, or Omens, of their future Love to him. Witness what is said of the *Syro-Phœnician Woman*, *Matt. xv. 28.* The *Roman Centurion* in *Luke vii. 9.* Nor need we scruple to rank the Parable of the *Good Samaritan* under this Head. Nor should we forget the Instance of the Greek Proselytes, who (*John xii. 21.*) desired *to see Jesus*. Upon which Account, our Lord seems to cry out, in some Degree of Rapture, — that *the Hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified* in the approaching Conversion of the Gentiles; of which
 this

* The different Expressions in the Greek of these two Texts, makes no Difference in the Sense.

this Curiosity of the Greeks, was a kind Chap.XIII.
of an *Omen*. I therefore interpret the § 18.
Verse thus. That the Jews in their
Way, were, *to all Intents and Purposes*,
wiser, in such kind of Wisdom as the
Unjust Steward's was, than the Children
of Light; since their bad Behaviour did
as much tend to promote all the wise
Ends and Intentions of Providence; as if
they themselves had contrived it so *on*
purpose; or with a real View of promot-
ing God's Designs, in the Call of the
Gentiles: And that this was a Scheme,
which the future Gentile Converts, or
Children of Light, could never have been
wise enough to have contrived for *them-*
selves, if the Jews had not done the thing
for them; by making themselves *unawares*
and *undesignedly* — the instrumental Means
of the Conversion of the Gentiles.

*V. 9. And I say unto you, Make to your-
selves Friends of the Mammon of Unrighte-
ousness; that when ye fail, they may receive
you into everlasting Habitations.*

*And I say unto you [Jews] make the
Gentiles, in Process of Time, to become
your Friends: Do this, I say of, or rather*

Chap. XIII. *out of* (ἐκ τῆς μαμωνᾶς) or by Means of the
 § 18. *Mammon of Unrighteousness: i. e. the old Law which you still retain. That when ye fail* [when you shall, by becoming Christians, cease to be any longer Jews, that *then*] *they* [the Gentile Christians] *may* [thereby] *receive you* [also] *into everlasting Habitations.* That is, into the Pale of that Church, which is not intended to last *only for a Time*, as the Jewish Law was; but — which is to last for ever: — Which is to *begin*, indeed, here on Earth, but to become more compleat hereafter in Heaven. And which will therefore be — *an everlasting Habitation, — a Crown that fadeth not away; — an eternal Inheritance*, Heb. ix. 15. *An Inheritance immortal*, 1 Pet. i. 4. So that these everlasting Habitations, will prove a comfortable Acquisition to you, after you have been, for so many Ages, wandering up and down like Vagabonds (or like *Cain* in the Land of *Nod*, or *Exile*) Gen. iv. 11, &c. without any fixed Habitation at all; but kicked and cuffed about, through all the Nations upon Earth. And the Reason

Reason why all this is permitted, we have Chap. XIII.
in the next, or § 18.

V. 10. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

That is; a Man of an unfaithful Disposition, will always continue so, be the Object of his Unfaithfulness, or the Charge committed to him, either *little* or *great*.

V. 11. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your Trust the true Riches? [The Translators should have said, the true Mammon; for the Word true in the Greek, can agree only with the foregoing Word Mammon.]

That is, if therefore you Jews never yet made a faithful and proper Use, even of the old Jewish Law, what Wonder if you are not fit to have the *true Riches* of Christian Revelation, committed to your Charge and Stewardship? 'Til those Ages shall come, in which your unbelieving Hearts, shall be converted and healed of their Unbelief. See *Matt. xiii. 15*.

V. 12. And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another Man's, who shall give you that which is your own? That

Chap. XIII. That is, — “ and if you have been
 § 18. “ such unfaithful Stewards of the *Mosaic*
 “ Dispensation, which may be called *another*
 “ *Man's*, and not *yours*, either *solely*
 “ or *principally* ; since the End of that
 “ Dispensation is not (as you vainly think
 “ and maintain) to promote the Good
 “ and Advantage of *your* Nation alone ;
 “ but was, from the very first, intended
 “ for the Benefit and Advantage of the
 “ *whole* Race of Mankind, *in due Time* :
 “ Since, I say, you have been such bad
 “ Managers of that Mosaic Oeconomy,”
who will give you that which is your own?
 And what is that? Why, 'tis the Stewardship of the Christian Mysteries ; more properly and eminently belonging to *them*, in the first Place ; by Covenant with their Patriarchal Ancestors ; and by which they were selected out of the common Mass of Humanity, to be God's *Peculiar* People. And 'tis properly their own *still*, though they have thought proper to abdicate their Right to it, *for the present*. But, in Time, when the *Fullness of the Gentiles* shall be come in, they will resume that Right again. And accordingly ; we
 read

read, in more Texts than we can quote at Chap. XIII. present, that the divine Wisdom thought § 18. it necessary, just, and fit, that this Stewardship of divine Revelation, should always be first *legally tendered* (as we say) *to the Jew*; and — *then* to the *Gentile*. This was the *Childrens Bread*, which was never to be *given to the Dogs*, 'till the Children had first wantonly thrown it away. *Matt. xv. 26.* And the Necessity of this Proceeding is justified in the following Verse, from the first Principles of Reason, and the very necessary Nature of Things.

V. 13. No Servant can serve two Masters: For either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

That is; God's true Dispensation, and the old *abrogated Mammon* of the Law of *Moses*, never can, in the very Nature of the two Things, be so far consistent with each other, as to compound one and the same Religion between them both: Their Aims being totally different. For Instance. The Practice of the old Law, is, by the very Nature and Constitution of it,
plainly

Chap. XIII. plainly and expressly confined to the Country of *Judæa* only: And cannot therefore be a Religion practicable by ALL the Nations upon Earth; as it was ever intended that the Christian Religion should. For Instance. How can the Inhabitants of *China* and *Japan*; or of *Peru* and *Chili*; order Matters so, that *all their Males shall, three Times in the Year, appear before the Lord God*: or appear personally at *Jerusalem*. Were I to add more Instances to the same Purpose, I might transcribe a large Share of the Pentateuch. Thus, you see, their stubborn Attachment to their old Law, makes it absolutely impossible for them, at the same Time to profess Christianity, by any kindly Law of Comprehension; and of course impossible for them to continue any longer the peculiar Favourites of Heaven.

V. 14. And the Pharisees also who were covetous, heard all these things: And they derided him.

And, considering their Nature and Character, how could they well do otherwise — since they did not understand one Word of the Parable? For hearing our
Lord

Lord talking something about Mammon, Chap. XIII. true Riches, &c. and being of Necessity, § 18. and in Consequence of their Infidelity, total Strangers to that Prophetic Language in which the Parables abound, they might naturally enough suppose our Lord to be declaiming against *Covetousness*; and of course make a Jest of him, for speaking lightly of so useful a Commodity as *Money*. This Behaviour of the Jews, occasions our Lord's concluding his Parable, by drawing a Character of the Jews of those Times, in this next Verse.

V. 15. And he said unto them, ye are they which justify yourselves before Men; but God knoweth your Hearts: For that which is highly esteemed amongst Men, is Abomination in the Sight of God.

Ye are they which justify yourselves before Men; [or endeavour to keep up your Credit with the People, by pretending to a great Zeal for the old Law] *but God knoweth your Hearts*: [that in Fact, you Jews of this present Age, are all Hypocrites; and no more believe in *Moses*, than you do in *me*.] This our Lord taxes them with in plain Terms (*John v. v. 46*
47.)

Chap. XIII. 47.) *For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: For he wrote of me. But, if ye believe not his Writings, how shall ye believe my Words?* So that our Lord might well conclude this Parable, with these Words. *For that* [vile, outside, specious, but hypocritical Shew of Sanctity, and pretended Zeal for the Law, which, in Fact, you look upon as nothing more than a State Engine to rule the Mob. And] *which* [so easily passes current in the World; and] *is highly esteemed among Men, is* [like all Hypocrisy in general] *Abomination in the Sight of God.**

§ 19.
General Ob-
servations on
Luke, chap.
xv. xvi.

Here ends the Parable; and our Lord immediately subjoins (but in a very covert Manner, fuitable to the avowed Intent of the Parables in general, — which was — not

* I have all along paraphrased the *English Text*, for the Sake of my *English Readers*; for the original Greek would shew my Paraphrase in a much stronger and clearer Light; by exposing some vulgar Interpretations that contradict the common Rules of Grammar. As in v. 9, where *the Friends* who were made so, by Means of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, are the undoubted Nominative to the Verb *Receive*. Whereas, some think that the Angels of God, are the Nominative tacitly understood.

not to be understood by the Jews of *that* Chap. XIII. Generation) he covertly subjoins, I say, such a Moral of it, as plainly justifies the foregoing Interpretation, *viz.* that (v. 16) *The Law and the Prophets were until John* : [in Force *only* until *John the Baptist* ; by whom our Lord was inaugurated into his Ministerial Office] *and* [that ever] *since that Time* [the Christian Oeconomy commenced] *and every Man* [let him be of what Nation he will] *presseth into it.* “ [As the “ chearful and ready Obedience, of the ho- “ nest and unprejudiced Gentiles, will rea- “ dily evince, soon after my Ascension into “ Heaven.]” Then follows that *poor* Text about *Adultery* : A Text as miserably mangled, as any *literal* Adulterer ever was, by an abused and enraged Husband. And all this, connects the Parable of the unjust Steward, with that of *Dives and Lazarus*. So that at last, these two Chapters, the xv and xvi of St. *Luke*, appear to be one continued Discourse, uniformly carried on, and visibly aiming at one great and important Point, well worthy of the divine Orator ; since it was no less than a Prophe- tic Description of the *intended Scheme*, the
great

Chap. XIII. *great and general* Scheme of the Redemption of Mankind; and a Sketch of God's Manner of dealing with the whole human Race, from the Beginning to the End of Time. We see *here* no Rope of Sand; — no unconnected, desultory, and sudden jumping from one thing to another, like the incoherent Rant and Rhapsody of a *Methodist* or a *Quaker*; — no skipping, God knows why, from the young *Spendthrift* to the knavish *Attorney* or *Steward*; — and then to *John Baptist*; — next (by Way of Parenthesis) to *Adultery*; — and so on to *Gluttony* and *Luxury*. No. We'll allow that all these are bad enough; and richly deserve to be taken to Task, *in proper Time and Place*; but then, *here* is neither *Time* nor *Place* for them: For we find nothing here, but one single and most closely reasoned Point; and the whole of it so artfully *Cemented, Rivetted, and Mortised* into ONE continued Discourse, on the most important of all Concerns; and such a Discourse, as is truly worthy of him, who *spake as never Man spake*. I proceed next to corroborate what has been said, by shewing how naturally
it

it all falls in with, and agrees, with two Chap. XIII. very remarkable Passages in the Book of *Judges*: And which stand there, I presume, for some wiser End, than the bare Amusement of the Reader; though that End seems to me, to be pretty generally overlooked.

The Passages I mean, are, the two § 20.
Miracles under *Gideon* the Judge of *Israel*; *Gideon's*
— that of the *Fleece of Wool*; and that *Fleece and*
other of the Extraordinary *Panic*, which *Lamps in*
the vast *Midianitish* Army was thrown *Pitchers.*
into, under the Conduct of that *Prophetic*
Hero, by suddenly exposing to View, the
Light of three Hundred *Lamps*, by break-
ing in Pieces, with the Sound of Trum-
pets, as many *Earthen Pitchers*, as those
Lamps had been concealed in, just before.
I doubt not, but that at first Sight, these
two miraculous Transactions, will appear
to the Reader, to have as little to do with
my Subject, as they have with one ano-
ther: And no more to aim at *one* Point,
than the two opposite Elements of Fire
and Water, of which they consist, can
be thought to agree together. But I'll
U engage

Chap. XIII. engage to evince the contrary; and to shew, that both of them were intended to express, exactly *one* and the same Thing; and to confirm that Point of Doctrine, which has been the sole Subject of so many of the last Pages of this Treatise. For these two Miracles are such a Composition of *Allegory*, *Miracle* and *Prophecy*, all compounded and worked up together; that we must of Necessity proceed upon the Rules of *Prophetic* Language, in the unfolding of them. I shall now therefore (for I have only *hinted* at it before) premise a short Word or two, concerning the Nature, Use, and Beauty, of the *Prophetic* Language of Scripture. And this I do, with a View also of stirring up our young Divines, to the Study of this much neglected Branch of Scripture Knowledge. A Branch of Knowledge that will soon give our Divinity Students, such a Taste for the superior Beauties and Sublimities of the *Prophetic* Books, as will make them (in Comparison to *that*) prefer the original Scriptures before the *Classics* (beautiful and delightful as the *Classics* are) as much as the Conversation
of

of Men of Sense, is preferable to a Game Chap.XIII.
at Marbles with the Boys.

As to the Nature of *Prophetic* Language, we may define it to be a *metaphorical* Manner of speaking, in certain Terms and Allusions, taken either, *First*, from the Face of Nature, or such visible Objects as are most commodious Emblems of spiritual Things. Or, *Secondly*, from the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*. Or, *Thirdly*, from such Events, recorded in the Patriarchal or Jewish History, as may so far bear a Similitude, to *other* future Events, that are to happen under the Gospel State, — as to be sufficient to predescribe such future Events ; if not in *plain Words*, yet — *covertly*, and in a kind of *Prophetic* Manner. The Prophetic Language made use of, in the *earlier* Scriptures is usually of the first Sort ; and drawn from such *Material* Objects, in the visible Creation, as best resemble those spiritual Ideas, to which they are applied. In the *Psalms*, and Writings of the later Prophets, and in the Book of *Revelations*, the Prophetic Language is

§ 21.
Nature of
Prophetic
Language of
Scripture.

Chap. XIII. often drawn, not only from such *Material* Objects, but also from the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law, as well as from ancient Occurrences in the Jewish History. To give an Instance or two of each of these three Sorts of Prophetic Language.

§ 22.

Drawn first
from sensible
Objects.

First, Of the Terms drawn from Natural Objects. By the Sun, is frequently signified the Person of our Saviour; giving spiritual Life and Light and Warmth to the World. The want of spiritual Instruction is called a Famine and a Drought. And by Rain or Dew, is meant the Word of God; which fertilizes our otherwise barren Natures, and makes us bring forth those good Works, which, in the same Prophetic Dialect are stiled *the Fruits of good Works*: And Thousands of the like Instances might be given. *Secondly*, As to Prophetic Terms, drawn from the Rites and Ceremonies of the Law; — of this Kind is, the stiling the Christian Church, *Sion*, or *Jerusalem*; and the calling true Believers — *the Seed of Abraham*. As being his Sons in a far more noble Sense, than they who were only descend-

ed

Secondly,
from Mosaic
Rites.

ed from his Loins. Since, while the one Chap.XIII.
 derives only his animal Life from *Abra-*
ham, the other receives from him, the true
 spiritual Life of his immortal Soul. Of
 like Sort is — the calling of our Prayers,
Incense; and the giving to Contrition and
 Repentance, the Name of *Sacrifice*. In-
 stances of the *third* Kind, drawn from
 Events in the Patriarchal or Jewish His-
 tory, may be seen in expressing a State
 of Bondage and Persecution, by the Name
 of *Egypt*. Hence also Idolatry, Heathen-
 ism, and in general, all kind of Opposi-
 tion to the Gospel, are called *Edom*, *Moab*,
Philistia, &c. Those Countries bearing
 much the same Relation to the Jewish
 State *formerly*, as the modern Enemies of
 the Faith, do to the Christian Church
 now. And the Use of Prophetic Lan-
 guage in general, is, by means of those
 visible Emblems and Similies, to give *us*
 the clearer Ideas of the spiritual Things
 which they represent, and foretell.

Thirdly,
 from Histo-
 rical Events.

But, over and above what has been § 23.
 said of the *Nature*, *Use*, and *Beauty* of Such Langu-
 the Prophetic Language; we are not to age, why ne-
 cessary.

Chap. XIII. forget, that as the World was circum-
stanced in the early Ages of Revelation ;
there was (if I may so speak) a kind of a
Necessity for the Holy Ghost to adopt the
Use of such Helps, into the inspired
Scriptures. For as it was the very Intent
of the supernatural Light of Revelation,
to furnish Men with such a new Sett of
Ideas, as they were as yet quite unac-
quainted with ; and consequently could
have no proper Terms, by which those
Ideas could be expressed : This introduced
the Necessity of such Metaphorical Allu-
sions, as we stile *Prophetic Language*.
And just so, the Introduction of new
Customs and Things — into *America*, has
obliged the Savages to eak out their scanty
and *uncopious* Languages, by like Allu-
sions. They express the making Peace,
by burying the Hatchet or Scalping Knife.
— Making War — by digging up the
Hatchet. — Opening a Trade, they call
clearing the Path. Keeping up a good
Correspondence, is — brightening the
Chain, *i. e.* the Chain of Friendship. So
that in every Inlett of new Ideas, where
old Words, must of course be wanting ;
there

there — Metaphorical Allusions, drawn Chap. XIII. from familiar Objects, must be taken in, to our Aid. Hence, when Prophetic Language was first introduced, it was of course taken wholly from natural Objects. But afterwards, when the Law of *Moses* took place, and when the Terms and Usages of that Law were grown familiar, then — those Terms began to be transferred, by *David* and the Prophets, to such Parts of the future Christian Oeconomy, as best resembled and corresponded with them. Give me Leave to make two short Observations here, and I go on.

First then, The visible Relation between Metaphors, and the real Antitype or Thing the Metaphor was taken from, must naturally give rise to Prophetic *Actions*, as well as *Words*. And hence the true Origin of those Holy Men in Scripture, who prophesied by a kind of Dumb Shew, or by *Actions* without *Words*. See Instances of this in the original Hebrew of *Isa.* xx. 3; In *Ezek.* xxiv. 16, &c. *Jeremiah* is full of these Instances. And of this same kind, in the *New Testa-*
U 4 *ment,*

§ 24.
First Observation.

Chap. XIII. *ment*, was *Agabus's* binding himself with St. Paul's Girdle, *Acts* xxi. 11. And Prophets who dealt in these Typical Actions, are the same (as Bishop *Chandler* observes) who in *Zech.* iii. 8. are stiled *אנשי מופת* [*anshé mopeth*;] not *Men of Wonder*, or *Men wondered at* (as our *English* Bibles sadly misconstrue the *Hebrew*) but — TYPICAL MEN, or Men who prophesied by *Typical Actions*.

§ 25.
Second Ob-
servation.

Secondly, Since many of these *Typical* Actions or Allusions, are not Comparisons mathematically exact; but only such as come *the nearest* to the Point aimed at; 'tis therefore very unfair Reasoning, to point either *Argument* or *Ridicule*, against the Metaphor; when such Metaphor may easily lead any Man (who is not cross-grained and perverse) into the true and real Mind and Intention of the Teacher. Thus, in the Doctrine of the Trinity, 'tis allowed that the Terms Father and Son, that are of so near Kin with the *first* Sort of Prophetic Language, or Scripture Metaphor, — do not *adequately* express that Relation between them, which perhaps
we

we, at present, are not able fully to con- Chap.XIII.
ceive. 'Tis only *some* Resemblance of
the Thing. And yet that poor Wretch
Chub could ask, Why God should not
have a *Daughter* as well as a *Son*? Such
a Reasoner should be asked, Why he did
not handle *his Glovers Needle and Sheers*,
instead of a Pen? But the Reader must
indulge me in a few Words more, upon
this Subject of Prophetic Language; and
then I shall the more chearfully move on,
to discharge my Promise, of explaining
the true Scope and Drift of these two fa-
mous Miracles, transacted in the Days of
Gideon.

I must observe, then, that it seems to
be a great Misfortune to the Cause of
Truth, that the Study of the Prophetic
Language of Scripture, seems to be fallen
into *Disuse* amongst us; * not to say into
some kind of *Contempt*. But 'tis not
very difficult to assign a probable Reason
why.

§ 26.
Third Obser-
vation.

* But how agreeably was I surprized, to see the
Use Mr. *Charles* has made of this Branch of Know-
ledge, in his incomparable Book on the Dispersion
at *Babel*, which came to me *after* both the fore-
going and following Pages were written.

Chap. XIII. why. For many Writers, both in ancient
§ 26. and more modern Times, have certainly
indulged their Imaginations, in this Kind
of Interpretation, to an extravagant De-
gree. This certainly *may* be done; but
then, there can be no worse *Logic* in the
World, than arguing against the *Use* of a
Thing, from a flagrant *Abuse* of it. For
then, nothing could ever be useful, since
corruptio optimi fit pessima. But the Truth
of the Matter seems to be, that many of
those Writers, following, perhaps, the
idle Example of *Philo Judæus*, did not
take in Hand the *only Clue*, necessary to
those who enter upon this Study. For,
from the little Insight that I have been
able to gain into this Matter, it seems to
be the sole Drift and Intent of Scripture
Allegory, which is so linked in with Pro-
phetic Language, as to be considered as
one with it; it seems, I say, to be the
sole Aim of it, to depict or describe, the
whole System of Christian Oeconomy at
large. We are therefore to *know this first*,
that none [of this Kind of] *Prophecy of*
Scripture, is of any private Interpretation;
but respects the *whole Gospel System* in
general.

general. Many Things of this Kind in Chap. XIII. Scripture, seem to have a *double* View; § 26. and to respect the *Person, Office, Doings,* and *Sufferings*, of our Lord, in the first Place; and through *him*, to glance, at the same Time, and in the same Manner, at what should afterwards happen to the whole Christian Church, that mystical Body of Christ. [*Rom. xii. 5. 1 Cor. xii. 27.*] *Out of Egypt have I called my Son* [*Hosea xi. 1. Matt. ii. 15.*] — was true of *Israel* first; — 'twas true of our *Saviour* next; — and according to the Rules of this Allegorico-Prophetic Language, it was also *a third time* true of the whole Christian Church (Christ's Mystical Body) when the Church was called out of *Egypt*, in the Days of *Constantine* the Great, who first gave the Gospel a civil Establishment, and thereby delivered it out of that *Egyptian* Bondage of Heathen Persecution, which it had hitherto suffered. Now, — though *St. Paul* (in the fourth Chapter to the *Galatians*, * as also in *1 Cor. x. 1, &c.*)

* But I mean as explained by *Pierce of Exeter*, in his excellent Dissertation on this Chapter; in which he sets the 26th Verse free from the Nonsense of our *English* Translation.

Chap XIII. 1, &c.) does actually lead us by the
 § 26. Hand, into this Manner of studying and
 applying the Scriptures ; — yet, I have
 met with People who should tell me, —
 “ ay, go as far as *St. Paul* goes, but then,
 “ — take Care to stop *there*.” But when
St. Paul puts me into a plain Path, shall
 any Man tell me, that I am put into that
Path, only that I may stand stock still,
 and go no further in it? No sure. Nor
 would I suffer myself to be turned aside
 from such a Path, by a little Ridicule.
 Let them tell me, if they will, that *this*
 and *that* is owing solely to Fertility of
 Imagination ; — to a Fancy roving with-
 out Bounds ; — that I see Figures in the
 Clouds ; — and that *what the Fool think-*
eth, that the Bell chinketh ; and so forth.
 But, I say, fair and softly ; for if one
 Man finds a Book, wholly written in an
 unknown Language and Character ; and
 some obscure Person (no Matter who)
 shall accidentally stumble upon a *Gram-*
mar and *Dictionary*, that enables me to
 unriddle all that *Cypher*, — and so as to
 translate the whole Book, into a plain,
 sensible, coherent and consistent Treatise,
 upon

upon some Subject useful to all Mankind : Chap. XIII.

Shall I, in that Case, suffer myself to be § 26.

bantered out of my Key, and be told that the Cypher is without any Meaning? And yet I should not be at all surprized to meet with such Treatment, from the present Adversaries of the Christian Cause; and to be told, that they, for their Parts, can see not the least *Similitude*, in these supposed Allusions. And I make no Doubt but that they may be supposed to speak true. For the Scriptures are like that Cloud that conducted the *Israelites* thro' the Red Sea, first, and then thro' the Wilderness, to the Borders of *Canaan*. We read, that this Cloud, in the Passage thro' the Red Sea, *came between the Camp* (or Hoast) *of the Egyptians, and the Camp of Israel.* *And it was a Cloud and Darknes* to the one, *but it gave Light by Night to these.* *So that the one came not near the other all the Night.* *Exod. xiv. 20.* So then, — while one and the same Cloud, afforded *Light* to the faithful *Israelite*; it was yet, at the same Time, a Cloud of *thick Darknes* to the unbelieving, stubborn, and obdurate *Egyptian*. And this is
the

Chap. XIII. the very Case *now*, between the Believer and the Unbeliever : The very same Scriptures that afford both Light and Warmth, to the Mind and Heart of a candid unprejudiced Christian, — are yet, nothing more than a thick Cloud of Darkness, to the Unbeliever. No Wonder then, that *the one comes not near the other all the Night*.

§ 27.
Same Observation continued.

And 'tis absolutely impossible it should be otherwise : There is an absolute Necessity for all this, plainly resulting from the fixed and unalterable Nature of Things. For, when an Infidel takes up a Bible into his Hands, merely with a Design to cavil and pick Holes in it, making, perhaps, as many wry Faces over it, as he would do over a Box of Pills ; 'tis plain, I say, that such a Man's Prejudices, do not give his Reason and Judgment *fair Play*. Nor *can* they. They take off that Attention of Mind, which is so necessary to the Investigation of *any* Kind of Truth ; by making us dwell with Pleasure, upon all that makes *against* the favourite Side of the Question ; while we huddle up in
Haste,

Haste, all that makes *for* it. Of course, Chap. XIII. then, such Prejudices put a Spoke into the Wheel of the Understanding; and *clog* those several Operations and Exertions of it, that are so indispensably necessary to all fair and candid Inquiry after Truth. Hence it is, that *some* Men, who are as sharp-sighted as so many Eagles, at *Astronomy*, *Optics*, or any other ordinary Science, NOT ALLIED TO MORALITY, — these same Men shall be as *dull* as *Beetles*, at some Things in Divinity, that bear hard upon their favourite Inclinations. And this is what our Saviour means, in *John* vii and xvii. [when rightly translated I mean; for the *English* falls far short of the original *Greek*.] *If any Man will* BE DESIROUS TO *do his* [God's] *Will*, HE shall know of the *Doctrine*, *whether it be of God*, or *whether I speak of myself*. [*i. e.* whether I speak as an Imposter, destitute of a *Divine Commission*.] Now, though all this be too fair a *Postulatum* to need an Apology; yet I cannot forbear observing, that 'tis nothing more than such plain common Sense and Equity, as stands in no need of any Divine Inspiration

Chap. XIII. tion to indite it afresh, — because old
 § 27. *Aristotle* [who died above four hundred Years before this Text of *St. John* was written] makes exactly this same *Postulatum*, of Honesty and Sincerity, even in any Man who would sit down (with any Success) to the Study of common Heathen Morality. I beg the learned Reader to turn to the Passage. 'Tis in the latter End of the third Chapter, Book the first, of his *Ethics*: from the Words τῶις γὰρ τοιούτοις κ. τ. λ. to the End of the Chapter. To return back, then, to the Nature of Religious Inquiry. When once *Vice* and *vicious* Inclinations come in to the Aid of *Folly* and *Ignorance*; [and it happens unfortunately, that “vicious Inclinations of the fiercest Kind, are apt to attack us most furiously, at that Time of Life, when Reason and Judgment begin to Bloom”] why then, — the more a Man reads the Scriptures, under all these Disadvantages, the more and more will he be apt to entangle himself, in the thorny and briary Thickets of *Scepticism* and *Infidelity*. And then, perhaps, he will begin to complain, that
 his

his poor Head is not a sufficient Match Chap.XIII.
for Scripture Difficulties : When the plain § 27.
Truth is, that *his Head* has nothing to do
in the Matter. For the Difficulties of
Christianity don't lie IN THE HEAD, so
much as in THE HEART. Though, in-
deed, if a Man's *Heart* be rotten, it will
soon communicate the Infection to his
Head. And then he will tell us, that —
“ he can't believe if he would ; and that
“ 'tis a hard Thing for a Man to be
“ damned only for what he can't help.”
That's true to be sure ; and none but such
as are broken in, to the Predestinarian
Principles of *Whitfield's* Tabernacle, can
deny it. But all others may ask—Whose
Fault is it ? For if a Man will first put
out his own Eyes, and then quarrel with
Providence, and bewail his cruel FATE,
in being DOOMED to knock his poor Head
against every Post he comes at, — pray,
who can help it ; and *who* is to blame ? I
trust that such of my Readers, as I am at
all ambitious of pleasing, will candidly
excuse this seeming Digression. There-
fore, so much for Prophetic Language.
I now begin again where I left off ; and

Chap. XIII. come to explain what seems to me, to be the true Meaning of those two extraordinary Miracles of *Gideon*.

§ 28.
Gideon's
Fleece ex-
plained.

The Fleece of Wool then, was the true Church, which at that Time, was the Jewish or Mosaic. And *Rain* or *Dew* is a noted and frequent Emblem of God's *Word*. At first, the Fleece which was exposed all Night upon the Floor, (and which was open to the Sky, according to the ancient and modern Practice of the East, who thresh their Corn *sub Dio*.) This Fleece, in the Morning, was full of Dew, while all the rest of the Country round about was dry. Denoting that the chosen Land alone, was, at that Time, blessed with the Profession of the true Religion, while all the rest of the World were Heathens, and destitute of it. Next Night (to compleat the Similitude, between this miraculous Event, and the grand Scheme of Redemption;) this Fleece, at the Request of *Gideon*, remained dry; while all the Country round about was covered with Dew. Just as the Jews are now deprived of the *Dew* of Heavenly

Heavenly Knowledge, while the convert- Chap. XIII.
ed Gentiles are so plentifully blessed with
it. And as *Gideon* now commenced an
Inspired Prophet, 'tis possible that the Drift
of the Mosaic Law, and some general
Outlines of the Christian Scheme, might
have been communicated to him, to
strengthen his Faith; though *Moses*, for
wise Reasons might omit to record it.
And if so; this may account for *Gideon's*
desiring (for his further Assurance) *this*
particular Miracle of the Fleece of Wool.

And now for the Miracle of the
Lamps concealed in Earthen Pitchers;
the sudden Glare of which, at Midnight,
when the Pitchers were broken, and the
Trumpets were blown, put the *Midian-
itish* Army into such a *Panic*, as routed
and put to Flight their whole Body. We
will suppose these *Midianites* to have re-
presented the whole Body of Heathen-
ism or Idolatry; according to the Usage of
Prophetic Language. The Lamps were
the Light of the Gospel. This Light
was concealed in the Earthen Pitcher of
the Mosaic Law; 'till that thick Covering

§ 29.
Miracle of
the Lamps in
Pitchers ex-
plained.

Chap. XIII. (often stiled the *Veil*) was at Length
§ 29. struck off, when our Saviour came to fulfil the Law, and so to shew the Typical Sense of it, — by exposing to View that Gospel Light, that till then had lain concealed under the Types and Allegories of the Law. The Consequence of this was, that Heathenism was soon put to the Rout, and the Gentiles convinced of the Gospel Truths, by searching the Scriptures, to see *if these Things were so or no*. Again. All this was brought about by the Christian Apostles, not by Force of Arms, like *Mahometanism*, but barely by Rational Addresses to the Free Will and Common Sense of Mankind. And accordingly, the same Method was made use of by *Gideon*, at God's Command. For out of thirty-two Thousand Men, of which *Gideon's* Troops, raised for the Defence of the Country, consisted; all that perceived themselves faint-hearted, were fairly ordered to disband and return Home. And accordingly, no less than twenty-two Thousand of them, took the Benefit of the Act, and went Home again. Out of the ten Thousand resolute *Hero's*, that still

still kept the Field, in Defence of the Chap.XIII.
Standard; the God of *Israel* pronounced, § 29.
that no less than nine Thousand seven
Hundred of them, were unnecessary for
the miraculous Event he intended to at-
chieve; and three Hundred *only* were se-
lected from the ten Thousand, to go
upon this desperate Attack, and to exe-
cute the divine Intention. This small
Band, by whom I suppose the Primitive
Preachers of Christianity to be meant,
were alone destined to rout the whole nu-
merous Host of *Midian*, only by blow-
ing their Trumpets [the constant pro-
phetic Emblem of Preaching] and at the
same Time, breaking in Pieces those
Earthen Pitchers, that concealed their
Lamps [that Gospel Light which 'till then
had lain concealed under the Veil of the
Law] the sudden Glare whereof, put the
Midianites (the Emblems, or Representa-
tives of Heathenism in general) to Flight.
And in good Truth, in those primitive
Times of the Gospel, when the Mosaic
Pitcher was *first* broke, and the Gospel
Light first flashed into the Face of Hea-
thenism, — they who blew the Trumpet

Chap. XIII. and broke the Pitcher, had need of good
 § 29. Courage with a Vengeance. For the first Teachers of Christianity were to look Death in the Face, dressed in all its most frightful Horrors: So that in those Days, Preaching was an Office that ill agreed with such delicate Constitutions, as had not *the Courage to take the Devil by the Beard, upon all proper Occasions.* Such is the Evidence these two Miracles bear, both to the Whole of the Gospel Scheme in general, and to the foregoing View of it in particular. And I suppose that our Saviour alludes to this covert Kind of Evidence, in general, — when he affirms (*Luke xxiv. 44.*) *that Moses, and the Prophets and the Psalms, so much concerned him; and that Moses, &c. spake of him.* For 'tis consonant to all Scripture, that by *speaking of him*, must be meant, *the shadowing of him out*; or giving the Outlines of his Person and Office, covertly, and under the Veil of Types and Allegories. If therefore, we apply ourselves to this Kind of Knowledge (which is, as yet, a Kind of an untried Mine; or which is as bad, a Mine badly work'd) we shall thereby
 be

be enabled to dive into the *internal* Evi- Chap.XIII.
dences of our Faith, which we shall find
to be, in Fact, its strongest Supports. I
mean the Harmony between the two
Testaments; which seems to be a Proof
of its Divinity, superior in some Respects,
even to Miracles themselves. For Mira-
cles being only Contraventions of the
stated Laws of Nature, they are there-
fore, properly, no more than Exertions
of that infinite Power, which (pardon
the Expression) can well afford to work
cheap: And the other being a Miracle of
Wisdom rather than *Power*, it must of
course be, in the Order of our *Ideas*, as
much superior to a Miracle of *Power*, as
the Human *Heart* and *Head*, are Limbs
of a nobler Kind than a *Hand* or a *Foot*.
But now to my Conclusion of this Topic.

Thus, we see at last, that the Christ- § 30.
ian Scheme, as laid down in the Para- Apology.
bles, tallies (as I promised to shew that it
would) with these two seemingly obscure,
but, in reality, *shining Evidences*, drawn
from the *Old Testament*. And if this
seeming Innovation in the manner of in-
X 4 interpreting

Chap. XIII. interpreting Scripture, should chance to give any Offence; I only beg it may be remembered, that Evidence is Evidence, let it come from what Quarter it will. No *Mathematician* with-holds his Assent to a demonstrated Problem, 'till he has learned where the Author was born and bred, — whether he be fat or lean, — rich or poor: — What Preferment he has, or whether he goes upon two Legs only, or upon two Legs and two Crutches together. And if no Man stands upon any such Inquiries, before he assents to a Mathematical Proposition; much less ought we to take a Prejudice at the *Obscurity, Meanness, Poverty, or low Estate* of any Man, who brings any Religious Knowledge to Light: Since it is so usual a Thing for God's Providence, to make use of even the *meanest and lowest* Tool, to effectuate his Designs withal.

C H A P.

C H A P. XIV.

A general View of the whole Scheme of Redemption, upon the foregoing Plan.

§ 1.
Connection
with what
precedes.

THIS Account of the Parables, and of their uniform Design to pre-describe the different Reception the Gospel should meet with, from the *Jew* and from the *Gentile*, — leads me on to a further Train of Speculation upon the same Subject; for which I make no Apology, as it tends so much to embellish and illustrate my main View in this Tract, which is, to display that Part of the Divine Wisdom, which so wonderfully shines forth, in what seems to be (if I may be pardoned the Expression) a most favourite Occupation of the Almighty. I mean, the Drawing an *immense* Proportion of *Good*, out of a *small* Degree of *Evil*. And this is the very Case of the great Scheme of Redemption, as we draw it from the general Scope of these Parables, compared with — and explained by — some other Parallel Parts of Scripture. We will therefore take a brief and comprehensive

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Chap.XIV. prehensive View of the whole of it, painted in Miniature.

§ 2.
Revelation
given to
Adam.

Upon the Creation of *Adam*, such a Share of divine Revelation as may be called the *Seed* of Christianity, was given both to him and his Descendents, as might afford Light sufficient for those Eyes, for which it was intended. The same was renewed again to Mankind, by *Noah*, after the Flood. And in Process of Time, there were fit and proper Additions made to the former Stock of Revelation, at proper Periods, to *Abraham* first, and then to the succeeding Patriarchs; all visibly tending, gradually, more and more, to pave the Way to the final Revelation of God's Will. So that now, the original Seed of Divine Revelation, began to make an Effort towards striking a Root, and the tender Plant began to shew its Seed-Leaves a little Way out of the Earth. And this State of Religion is what we call the *Patriarchal* Dispensation. Which was soon corrupted; as the *Adamic* Tradition was, by those who lived before the Flood. However, the Patriarchal Religion

ligion was kept up, here and there, in a Chap.XIV. greater or less Degree, down to the Days of *Moses*: And seems to have expired in the Person of *Balaam*. For as wicked a Wretch as *Balaam* was, he was evidently a Prophet of the true God, upon the Patriarchal Scheme: And he therefore fully shewed to what a low Ebb the Patriarchal Religion was reduced, when even a Prophet of it was so base and bad a Man. With *him* the Patriarchal Dispensation probably ended; for just *there* the *Mosaic* commenced. And it seems probable, that this Patriarchal Dispensation, was in itself, of a nobler and more spiritual Nature, than it might be proper for *Moses* to relate in the Book of *Genesis*; which is yet, the only Remains of Antiquity, that can help us to any Knowledge of it. But something, at least, of this Kind is *hinted* by our Lord's telling the Jews, that tho' *Moses* indeed, suffered them to put away their Wives, yet that Sufference was because of the Hardness of their Hearts. For, from the Beginning, i. e. during the Patriarchal Dispensation, it was not so. I shall only observe further, that in this general
Revolt

Chap. XIV. Revolt from the Patriarchal Religion, consisted those *Transgressions* which St. Paul speaks of, when he tells us [*Galat. iii. 19.*] that *the Law* (of Moses) *was added because of Transgressions, till the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was made.* And these *Transgressions* are also the same with that *riotous Living*, with which the Prodigal in the Parable *wasted his Substance.* But to return.

To Noah and the Patriarchs

In Time, totally neglected. But

§ 3.
Repaired by the Mosaic Law.

And now, that the Patriarchal Religion was universally neglected and forgotten, over the Face of the whole Earth (with few or no Exceptions) and Heathenism grown up in its stead: The Field of God's Word may be said, at this Period of Time, to be over run with Briars, Thorns and Weeds. What must now be done with the young and tender Plant of Christian Revelation? What could be done with it, I ask, but that only which actually *was* done with it? Why, as the Field in which it was sown, was in such a State, it was wisely transplanted, by the Wisdom and Goodness of God, into the Shelter of a Kind of Hot-House. A particular

ticular People were chosen out of the Chap.XIV.
grand Body of the depraved Human
Race, to tend it, and take Care of it.*
They were to guard it safe, from being
quite choaked and killed, by the amazing
Growth

* Against God's separating *one* peculiar People, from the Bulk of Mankind, our Deists object the Charge of Partiality: And ask, how the Common Parent of *all*, can be supposed to be so partial to *some*? A Piece of Nonsense this, built upon the boggy Foundation of a *Metaphor*, that equally proves against the very being of *any God at all*. A Kind of Madness, into which almost *all* Deistic Objections are resolvable. For if we don't *see* that he has made *Archangels* and *Angels*; yet, we see *plainly* that he has made *Men, Beasts, Birds, Fishes* and *Insects*. And pray, is not God, the common Parent of all these? This idle Cavil supposes the Relation of the CREATOR TO HIS CREATURES, to be *exactly* parallel to that between a Human Parent and his Children; which is false. For God has a Right in all Cases, to do as his Wisdom directs him, for the *general* Good of the Whole; and which of Course must incline him to make a *Chain of Beings*; as well as *Subordinates* in each *Link* of that *Chain*. Whereas, an Earthly Parent stands equally related to *each* of his Children. Therefore though it may be *unjust*, in the Father of two Sons, equally deserving, to give a good Estate to *one*, and to bequeath only a *Stool*, and a *Brush*, and a *Pot of Blacking* to the other; still it is not at all unjust
in

Chap. XIV. Growth of that great Instance of Human

§ 3. Folly and Weakness, *Idolatry*. This was *one* main Design of the Law of *Moses*, but not the *only one*, as some have vainly conceived; for the *other*, and that the *principal* one, was, to typify and pre-describe the Christian Oeconomy, so that at its Appearance in the World, it should plainly shew itself, in its proper Light, to every honest and ingenuous Mind. The Law was a Kind of a Miniature Picture of the Christian Scheme, kept in the Dark, 'till the *Son of Righteousness* should arise, and display the Beauties of it, as well as shew the *Prophetic* Resemblance it bore to what it was intended to pre-describe.

And

in the CREATOR, to make *some* Men *Gentlemen*, and others *Shoe-Cleaners*: Because the Nature of Human Society requires it; just as the Nature of the Human Body requires *Hands* and *Feet*, as well *Eyes* and *Ears*. Alas! Such Opponents as the Clergy of *England* generally have to deal with, little consider, that had it not been for this wise Disposition of Things, every Infidel upon the Face of the Earth, might have been *all Guts* and *no Brains*; — literally speaking.

And thus we see, that the young Plant Chap.XIV.
of Divine Revelation, was, for the greater
Security of it, transplanted into the Gar- § 4.
den of *Moses*. And what a Root did it State of it un-
strike in that Soil! Nay, so amazingly der the Law.
were Things contrived by the divine
Wisdom, that the less it was cherished
and tended, by those Husbandmen to
whose Care and Custody it was com-
mitted, the more deeply did it strike Root,
and the more strongly did it take hold of
the Earth. For, the very frequent Sins
and Revolts of the Jews, did, by Means
of the Prophets, sent from Time to Time
to reclaim them, continually add more
and more Strength to the Arguments, on
which the divine Authority of the Law
was founded; and at the same Time
served to pave the Way, more and more,
for the Introduction of Christianity.

And how could the Divine Authority § 5.
of any Law be more clearly and strongly Divine Au-
ascertained, than that of *Moses* was? For thority of
we argue thus. The Jewish Religion, *Moses* evinc-
and Jewish People *do now* exist; and ed.
therefore we may fairly presume, I hope,
that

Chap.XIV. that a Time was, when it first had a *Be-*

§ 5. *ginning.* That Beginning, I suppose, had *some* Cause or other; and the whole Scheme of it was brought into Existence either by *Truth* or *Falshood*. If it was an Imposture craftily imposed upon the World, it must have been built upon such a Complication of the most incredible and portentous Lies, that ever yet entered into the Heart of Man; all of them so easily confuted and exposed by a whole *Nation* of Witnesses; that of course it could never have gained the least Degree of Credit, from those cotemporary Jews to whom *Moses* addressed his Law. He tells them, when they drew near the Borders of *Canaan*, that no more than forty Years before, God — by *his* Ministry, brought their whole numerous Nation from out of Bondage in *Egypt*, by a miraculous Passage through the *Red Sea*. That he *then* gave them their Law from the Top of Mount *Sinai*, in that tremendous Manner that stands recorded in the Book of *Exodus*. That all this passed in the Sight and Hearing of their whole Nation, *Man, Woman* and *Child*; who all lay

lay incamped in a Valley at the Foot of Chap.XIV.
the Mountain, with a full View of the § 5.
Mountain at one End of the Valley, as
appears from the modern Plans of the
Spot. He adds, that they were then
conducted up and down the Desarts of
Arabia Petræa, for forty Years together,
by a miraculous Cloud by Day, and a
Pillar of Fire by Night: being all this
while miraculously *found* both in Meat,
Drink and Cloathing. 'Till at length,
upon their Arrival on the Borders of
Canaan, the Waters of the *Jordan* (a very
large and deep River at the Place where
they passed it) were miraculously divided
for their Passage; and the Walls of the
first hostile Town they came to, were
shaken down by them, only by the blow-
ing of a few Horns. Had all these things
been nothing more than Romantic Fic-
tions and plain Gasconades, could those
Jews who went over *Jordan* with *Joshua*,
ever have received that Book for divine,
which contained such a Pack of Stuff as
they *knew*, by the Evidence of their own
Senses, to be Lies? Or can we suppose a
whole numerous Nation to be so besotted,

Chap. XIV. as to receive a thing for true, which they knew to be false, and knowingly to transmit such an Imposture down to their Posterity; and to deceive their own Flesh and Blood so grossly? Or can we suppose that there was not one single Soul among them all, *weak* enough to betray the Plot to Posterity, by some Blunder and Inadvertence; nor any one *honest* enough to undeceive Posterity *designedly*?

§ 6.
And illustrated
by a sup-
posed In-
stance.

Let us only make this our *own* Case, and illustrate the thing by supposing a similar Transaction to happen among ourselves here in *England*. Suppose Mr. *Whitfield* were, next *Sunday*, to tell his Audience in the Tabernacle, — that “ they
“ were all born, not in *England*, but in
“ *France*: From out of which wicked
“ Country he *himself* had brought them,
“ about forty Years ago, all through the
“ Sea from *Calais* to *Dover*, by dividing
“ the Waters of the *British* Channel, that
“ they might walk over dry-shod. That
“ he maintained all his Friends, in a mi-
“ raculous Manner, during a hungry and
“ thirsty March, all the Way from *Dover*,
“ through

“ through the County of *Kent*, as far as Chap.XIV.
 “ the Foot of *Shooters-Hill*. From the Top
 “ of which Hill, he did, fairly, and in the
 “ Sight of them All, — in a most visible
 “ and tremendous Manner, receive his di-
 “ vine Commission, to vilify and scandalize
 “ the Regular Clergy of this Land, and
 “ to talk Nonsense at the Tabernacle.
 “ And that in their March from thence
 “ to the Meeting-House in *Moorfields* [the
 “ promised Land of *Methodism*] he di-
 “ vided the River *Thames* for their Pas-
 “ sage: And because *he*, that in those
 “ Days, was Chaplain at the *Tower*, was
 “ a carnal unregenerate Wag, that broke
 “ Jests upon him, he therefore shook
 “ down the *Tower of London* about his
 “ Ears, only by singing a choice new
 “ Hymn at it, as he went by, towards the
 “ *Minories*.” Now, though I well know,
 that the Throat of a *British* Infidel is so
fearfully and wonderfully made, that it can
 either *strain at a Gnat*, or, upon Occa-
 sion, *swallow a Camel*; yet, I can never
 believe, that a single Soul of them will
 think otherwise, than that Mr. *Whitfield's*
 Disciples, upon hearing such a Discourse

a cut at
the Methodists

Chap. XIV. as this, would, instead of adoring him as a Saint of prime Magnitude, and a Reformer of a most filthily corrupted Church, — rather make a Collection, at the Tabernacle Door, for his more cleanly and decent Support in a Mad-House. And yet, these same Unbelievers, who suppose *Moses* to have been an *Impostor*, must believe this, and fifty times * as much more, to have succeeded well with *Moses*; and to have been swallowed down, by the whole Jewish Nation, without the least Boggle or Contradiction. But what will an Infidel *not* believe, rather than give up a Point.

§ 7.
Mosaic Law
impossible to
have been
forged.

'Tis plain therefore, that the Law of *Moses* could not have been an Imposture put upon the Jews by *Moses* himself: And pray when, and at what possible Period of Time, could it have been forged, and imposed upon the Jews, in his Name, by any body else? Let us briefly examine each Period of Time, from *Jesus Christ*,
up

* Whoever will give himself the Pleasure of reading Mr. *Charles's* excellent Book on the Dispersion at *Babel*, will see how moderate and modest I have been in this Calculation.

up as high as *Moses*; and see if such a Chap.XIV.
strange Fraud could possible have been
carried on, in any one of them. Not be-
tween the *Babylonish* Captivity, and the
Birth of Christ, for many obvious Rea-
sons. Particularly, because during that
whole Period, the *Jews* and *Samaritans*
were at Daggers drawn, like the *Protest-*
ants and *Papists* now; so that between
both Parties (each receiving the Law of
Moses) the Plot must have been blown
up. Besides, those Times were too far
advanced into the Age of creditable His-
torians, for such a Plot not to have been
taken Notice of, and properly exposed.
It could not have been done between the
Captivity and King *David's* Days, be-
cause King *David*, and all the Prophets
after him, do unanimously bear Testimo-
ny to the *Pentateuch*, or five Books of
Moses, as inspired Books, of long stand-
ing, and written by *Moses* himself. It
could not have been done between *David's*
Time, and that of *Moses*, that is, during
the Period of the *Judges*, for many Rea-
sons. For *David*, who bears this Testi-
mony to the Date of the Law, was born

Chap. XIV. but little more than 360 Years after the Death of *Moses*. Then again, the *Jews* of that Period, were perpetually revolting to Idolatry; and would, of course, have born Testimony against the imposing such a Law upon them, as so stoutly withstood their Idolatrous Practices, so fervently forewarned them against their Revolts, and so severely censured them for being the most *stubborn and rebellious* of all Men. Therefore, surely, those Jews, *of all others*, would have been the most averse from lending a Hand to *such* an Imposture, or from concealing the Fraud; if any such Fraud had been contrived, either *in* or *near* their own Times; since it so strongly opposed their strange Propensity to Idolatry, and so severely censures all their numerous Faults and Failings.

§ .8
Same
ment
nued.

Besides, the Jewish Constitution, both in Church and State was, at that Period, quite settled upon the *Mosaic* Plan; and every Jew held his Estate, and derived his Title to it, wholly from the Authority of the *Mosaic* Law. For by the *Jubilee* Law, no Man could alienate, or sell his Estate,

Estate, from his Family, for any longer Chap.XIV.
Term of Time, than to the next Year of
Jubilee, when the right Heir entered upon
it of course. * This Law not only kept
up the Distinction of Tribes (instituted
for the wisest Reasons) but also, of course,
obliged every landed Jew, to keep an ex-
act and well attested Geneology of his
Family; since his Title to his Estate de-
pended wholly on his proving his Descent
from that particular Ancestor of his, who

Y 4

received

* The *Jubilee* did not derive its Name from the
Jâbels, or Trumpets like Rams Horns [such as the
German Postillions use now: And which, though
not much bigger than a Man's Fist, shall yet make
a horrid shrill Noise, that may be heard a Mile or
two] but it was so named from a Verb that signifies
to *bring* or *restore* Things to their former State;
reducere. Because the *Jubilee* restored all Estates to
those right Heirs, from whom they had been sold
away, since the preceding *Jubilee*. From this *Ori-
ginal Idea* of *returning back*, after such a Period
of Time, a Noun from it, comes to signify the
Products of the Earth; especially such as return
Annually; as Corn, Hay, &c. And 'tis likely
enough, that the same Name might be, from thence,
transferred to such little Trumpets, whether made
of Brass, or real Rams Horns, — as were sounded
upon the Publication of the *Jubilee*: Since from
their spiral Form, they resembled little concentrical
Circles, *returning into themselves*.

Chap. XIV. received the *first* Investiture of it, when the Country was divided among the several Tribes, and subdivided among the several Families of each Tribe, *by Lot*; as *Moses* had before directed. This Partition was made in the Time of *Joshua*, the immediate Successor of *Moses*: And is a full Proof that the Law of *Moses* was *then* in Being, and submitted to by the Jewish Nation; and therefore not forged in that Period of Time, but received from *Moses* as a *Divine* Law, and which we have already shewn, could not possibly have been received by that Nation, had it been an Imposture. And we may defy any Man to assign *that* Period, in which it *possibly could* have been forged. So that upon the whole, both the *National History* of the Jews, their *Civil Government*, and their *Ecclesiastical Polity*, were so wonderfully worked up, blended, and incorporated together, that they must of Necessity *stand* or *fall* together. And it does as clearly appear, that *Moses* must have acted by a Divine Commission, as it appears that there are either *Jews* or *Judaism*, at this Day subsisting in the World.

For

For since *no* Period of Time can be named, in which it was *possible* to have been forged : 'Tis but a very fair and logical Conclusion, that it never could be forged *at all*. Here, therefore, we stand fast. The Law of *Moses* was Divine. And from the Date of that Law, Divine Revelation, and the true Religion, were confined to the Jewish Nation *only*. But then,

As the general Revolt of Mankind, from the Patriarchal Religion to Idolatry, introduced this Necessity of substituting or introducing the *Mosaic Dispensation*, — so, — it was to last no longer than *that Necessity* required : And that was, — 'till that *Fullness of Time should come*, in which our Saviour was to appear in the Flesh, — to compleat the Prophecies, — and to fulfil the Law, by offering up the all-sufficient Sacrifice of *himself*, upon the Cross ; and thereby, to build up the everlasting Edifice of the Christian Church. The Law of *Moses* was but the *Scaffold* to this Building ; and of course it was knocked away, as of no further Use, when the Body of the

§ 9.
True Intent
of the *Mosaic*
Law.

Chap. XIV. the Edifice was in such Forwardness, as

§ 9. no longer to want the Help of a *Scaffold*. So, now that the *Christian* Oeconomy takes place, the *Jewish* Oeconomy ceases. The Seal of Heaven is plainly set to this Truth, in that unparallel'd Scene of Horror, the final Destruction of the City of *Jerusalem*, and the Jewish State, and the Dispersion of this People over the Face of the whole Earth. Nay, the whole Scheme of their Religion seems to be peculiarly adapted and contrived, to prevent its being put in Practice *after* their Dispersion. For their principal Rites are *local*, tied down to *Judæa*, or rather to *Jerusalem* only; and of course can be practiced no where else. And 'tis extremely remarkable, that the small Plain upon the Top of Mount *Moriah*, where the Temple and Altar formerly stood, is now carefully walled in by the *Turks*, who have built a small octangular *Mosk* upon the Spot where the Holy of Holies formerly stood: And they have made a Law, though not a Man of them can tell why, that if either a Jew or a Christian shall venture into this *Mosk*, or even within

within the Inclosure of the Wall, the Pe- Chap.XIV.
nalty is either Circumcision or Death : § 9.

Though *any* where else in the *Turkish* Dominions, a few *Aspers* will turn the Key of any *Mosk* whatever. So carefully has Providence guarded the *only* Spot, where these abolished Jewish Sacrifices can be legally offered. And it has been frequently observed, and remarkably deserves to be so, that for their Revolt to *Heathenism*, under their Law, they were punished only with a *Seventy* Years Captivity; whereas for their crucifying their Messiah, and rejecting the Calls of the Gospel, they have already been punished with a *Seventeen Hundred* Years Exile; and how much longer 'tis to last, we know not: We only know, that it will last 'till *the Fullness of the Gentiles be come in, i. e.* when Christianity shall be professed by all * the Nations upon Earth.

And

* I should have observed above, that the Patriarch *Jacob*, in *Gen. xlix. 10.* speaking of the *gathering of the People*, does not use the Word *Goyim*, which signifies *the Gentiles*, in Contradistinction to the *Jews*; but, *Ammim*, the general Word for all *People*, whether Jews or Gentiles. Accordingly,
the

Chap. XIV.

§ 10.
Wisdom of
this Dispensation.

And here let us mark the Wisdom of God, and the Beauty of this divine Oeconomy. For as Matters are now ordered, the Jews do still continue to answer the original End and Purpose for which God picked them out, and made them his peculiar People, or the Keepers of the sacred Records. They are still kept employed in their old Occupation, as so many *Labourers*, or *Under-workmen*, to bring Materials for building the Temple of God. For they are both the *bitterest* Foes that Christianity has to deal with, and yet the most *zealous* Defenders and Maintainers of those sacred Records of the *Old Testament*, on which Christianity is built. Nay, it is notorious to all Scholars, versed in *Rabbinical* Learning, that the Jews, who wrote in the early Ages of Christianity, do, in their Writings still extant, acknowledge also the Miracles both of our Lord and his Apostles.

This

the Jews were, *at Length*, to be gathered to the *Shiloh*, as well as the Gentiles. Whereas had he used the Word *Goyim*, he had seemed to have *admitted* the *Gentiles*, to the total *Exclusion* of the *Jews*; contrary to the whole Scheme of Redemption.

This has been fully evinced by many Writers; particularly by *Wagenfeil*, in that valuable Collection of his, called *Tela ignea Satanæ*: And very lately by the worthy and learned Dr. *Gregory Sharp*. The Jews, in those ancient Writings I allude to, endeavour to solve our Lord's miraculous Power, by a certain Charm he stole out of the Temple of *Jerusalem*: But, could they have had the Face, in those *early Ages*, to have denied the Matters of Fact, which were then *all* recent, it is obvious that it would have been their *Business*, as it most certainly was their *Inclination*, — to have cut the Knot at once, by denying that such Miracles were ever wrought *at all*: Without exposing themselves, and their Cause, by having Recourse to such a wretched Subterfuge, as that of the *Charm*; which only plunged their miserable Cause the deeper into the Mire.

Hence we see, with what consummate Wisdom, the whole Oeconomy of Revealed Religion has been ordered by God's Providence! Its most inveterate Enemies

§ II.
Its Utility, at Length to Jew and Gentile.

Chap. XIV. enemies subscribe to those Miracles, which
 § II. were wrought in Proof of its Divine Authority; and have taken Care, contrary to their own manifest *Inclination, Views* and *Aims* in this Inquiry, — to attest the Authenticity, and hand down to Posterity, those ancient sacred Books, upon which the Gospel is built; and from which its earliest and strongest Arguments are drawn. Now, had those Books been put into the Hands of, and those Miracles wrought amongst, — any People less stubborn and obdurate than the Jews of that Age; such a Nation must, without doubt, have been all converted by the Preaching of our Saviour and his Disciples: [And *then*, by the Bye, *that* must have prevented that national, *necessary* Act of theirs, their slaying the all-sufficient Sacrifice.] But, had that been the Case, and had the Jews been *nationally* converted, their Conversion must, in Length of Time, either have wholly invalidated, or at least very much weakened, our best and strongest Arguments in Defence and Proof of Christianity. For then, it would neither have appeared so clearly, that the
 Prophecies

Prophecies were *authentic*, nor the Mira- Chap.XIV.
cles real Matter of *Fact*. For the Jews § 11.
would *then* have become Parties, equally
concerned with *us*, to make Christianity
good; and of course it would have been
false Reasoning to have quoted their E-
vidence in the Case. A *Chinese* or a
Brahmin might then have charged the
Primitive Christians, with forging *both the*
Testaments, in order to make the *Cypher*
tally with the *Key*: And were I to keep
an Act upon the Divine Authority of our
Lord, before an Audience of *Moguls* and
Tartars, in the University of *Bennares*,
upon the River *Ganges*, I might be puz-
zled, for want of Rational Means of e-
vincing the contrary. But, as the Case
now stands, the Answer is *plain* and *easy*.
I can tell a *Chinese* or an *Indian*, “ that
“ the Jews, our bitterest Foes, will attest
“ the contrary to him; even to the Con-
“ fusion of their *own* Cause, and the Ad-
“ vancement of *ours*. And that God
“ has so ordered it that these unwilling
“ Witnesses to the Grounds of the Faith
“ which I preach to him, are dispersed
“ over the Face of the *whole Earth*, and
are

Chap.XIV. “ are to be found in almost every Sea
 “ Port, and great Trading Town in the
 “ World; as his own *Banyan* or *Broker*,
 “ can inform him: — So that Men of
 “ every Nation under the Sun, may have
 “ Recourse to them *personally*, to know
 “ whether we speak true or no.” Hence
 it is plain, that none but a stubborn and
 unworthy People, and such as should be
 always, and in every Period of their His-
 tory, *resisting the Holy Ghost*; ’tis plain, I
 say, that none but *such* could fitly be
 made choice of, to be the peculiar People
 of God, and Keepers of the sacred Re-
 cords: Because, none but such could an-
 swer the *Intent* of their being kept *at all*.
 It being so contrived by God’s Wisdom,
 that this *absurd* and most *amazing* People,
 should, in the Order of his Providence,
 resemble so many Pipes of Lead: Which
 are of the greater Use to convey the Wa-
 ters of the Well of Life to *others*, because
 they are too obdurate to imbibe any of it
themselves. But to proceed.

§ 12.
 Confirmed
 from Gen.
 xlix. 10.

We learn from Scripture, that Matters
 are to continue upon *this* Footing, be-
 tween

tween Jew and Gentile, as long as there Chap.XIV.
 are any *unconverted* Gentiles remaining
 upon the Face of the Earth. And we
 learn further, that when that great Point
 is effected, then, the *Jews* also *themselves*,
 shall, last of all, be converted to the true
 Faith. For, by the foregoing Reasoning,
 when the final and complete Conversion
 of the *Gentiles* shall be achieved (to which
 Conversion the Jews are *now* so useful
 and necessary a Help) why then, — all
 the Use that Providence ever intended to
 make of their stubborn Unbelief, will be
 at an End. And when God shall have
 drawn all the Good from out of that Evil,
 that he had Occasion to draw from it,
then — that Evil is to cease. And ac-
 cordingly, God has provided a natural
 Means (as yet in Store) to put an End to
 their Unbelief: Which Means consists
 wholly in this very Conversion of the
 Gentiles. For when the Jews shall see
 so signal an Instance of the Completion of
Christian Scripture, and so *Evident* a Proof
 of the Divinity of the Gospel, — as that
 by their *own* unwilling Help, the whole
 Mass of Gentilism, shall be brought into

· Z

the

Chap. XIV. the Church ; — an Event so amazing in itself, that the Infidels of the eighteenth Century made a Jest of it, — and yet an Event so *clearly* and *plainly* foretold, in *both* the Testaments, — more especially by St. Paul : — I say, — when in Ages yet to come, the Jews shall see all this done before their Faces ; the Consequence *must* be, that if the Jews do but continue, in those future Times, to be *only Human Creatures, endued with but the least Share of common Sense*, they will no longer be able to resist such flagrant Evidence ; an Evidence that *must* convert them all, in spite of their most deeply rooted Obstinacy and Prejudice. Accordingly — *In that Day*, says the Prophet [Zech. xii. 10.] *I will pour upon the House of David, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of Grace and of Supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only Son ; and shall be in Bitterness for him, as one that is in Bitterness for his first born.* The Reader will easily observe, that the seeming Impropriety of looking upon *ME* whom they have pierced, and mourning for *HIM*,

HIM, is easily reconciled by the Orthodox Chap. XIV. Doctrine of the *Trinity*. And the Jews of those future Times foretold in it, will *then* be able to construe this Text aright. But this by the Bye.

But here, give me Leave to observe, by the Way (and as an Illustration of what has been said, on Prophetic Language) that when St. *John* alludes to this Text (chap. xix. 37.) *they shall look on him whom they pierced*, — it is evident that the Evangelist applies these Words *here*, in their lower, meaner, and less noble Sense, to those Jews who *saw* our Saviour pierced on the Cross. Whereas 'tis plain, that the Text as it stands in *Zech. xii. 10.* and which in Fact, contains the *highest* and *noblest* Sense of this Prophecy, was not intended to foretell barely the Jews *gazing* upon him while he hung on the Cross; but, — their *turning to him* (or to faith in him) in those future Times, when all Jews shall be converted to the Faith, after the total Conversion of the Gentiles. For otherwise, the Prophecy of *Zechariah* was fulfilled *only in Part* [which was yet enough

§ 13.
John xix. 37.
explained
and applied.

Chap. XVI. for St. *John's* present Purpose] since we
 § 13. read in the latter Part of *Zechary's* tenth
 Verse, — that the Jews were *there* to
 mourn for him *most bitterly*; whereas the
 Jews spoken of by St. *John*, were so far
 from *mourning for him* at all, — that [*Luke*
xxiii. 35—39] they were very unanimous
 in *deriding* him, — *mocking* him, — and
railing on him. Hence, 'tis more than
probable, for to *me* 'tis quite *evident*, that
other Prophecies, applied by the Evan-
 gelists to what happened to Christ *per-*
sonally, were intended *chiefly* (thro' him)
 to foretell Events that were to befall *the*
Church, in future Ages. And, there is,
 not only great *Beauty*, but also great *Use*,
 in these *double* Prophecies; since the first
 Completion of them, in their *lower* or *less*
 noble, Sense, is a Pledge to us, of the
 future Completion of them, in their higher
 and nobler, — because more *general* and
important, Sense, in latter Ages. As thus.
 “ So surely as those Jews who crucified
 “ our Lord, gazed on his wounded Body
 “ on the Cross; — so surely shall they”
 [they and their Posterity taken together,
 in their Corporate Capacity, according to
 this

this Prophetic Language] “ so surely shall Chap.XIV.
 “ they, in Time to come, look on him § 13.
 “ to some Purpose : For they shall, in
 “ due Time, *repent* of their Infidelity, —
 “ turn to the Christian Faith ; — and
 “ look [by the Eyes of Faith] *upon him*
 “ who was pierced by their Ancestors.”

I will venture to say, that some Expounders might, by this Key, have saved themselves a great deal of Sweating and Tugging to small Purpose. For, certainly, there is a great *seeming* Impropriety, in some of those Prophecies that are applied by the *Evangelists* ; — UNTILL we come to *consider*, that the whole of the *Law*, and the *Psalms*, and the *Prophets*, were solely *intended* as an Introduction to Christianity ; and *constantly claimed* and *challenged* as such, by our Saviour. Of course then, since it was the great Scope of the Law, both in its Rites and Ceremonies, as also in its Historical Passages, to typify Christ, it follows of course, that many Rites and Ceremonies, as well as Historical Passages (though not *professedly* nor *expressly* there said, in each particular Place, to be *intended* for Prophecy) may yet be quoted and alledged as *express*

Chap. XIV. *Prophecy*: Because, 'tis enough that *there* they stand. 'Tis enough that they all stand there, as Parts of that general Scheme of Revelation, which is so often asserted, by our Lord himself, to be as one continued *Prophecy*, of the whole Oeconomy of Redemption; or in other Words, a continued Pre-description of it. And if the Reader should ask, why their true Meaning often lies so deep and obscure, let him turn back, for his Satisfaction, to what is said above [in Chap. xii. § 28.] concerning the Nature and Resolution of Scripture Difficulties.

§ 14.
This confirmed from
Gen. xlix. 10.

But further. The Quintessence of this whole Scheme of Redemption, is given us in that most noble Prophecy of *Jacob*, in Gen. xlix. 10. *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the Gathering of the People be.* A Text this, which has puzzled all Commentators, ancient and modern, more, by far, than any other in the Bible. But it is now to be easily and fairly made out, by a little Help, borrowed from the *Arabic*. Mr. Charles, in his Dispersion at *Babel*, seems

seems to have hit off the major Part of Chap. XIV. this famous Text, even *better* than the great Bishop *Sherlock* has done. He supposes the *Sceptre* to be the Theocratic, or Kingly Power of God, annexed to the Mosaic Oeconomy; *Moses* to be the *Mechokék* or *Law-giver*. But the Words *Shiloh* and (*yikkebáth*, the) *Gathering*, do *still* want Explication. For the true Sense of *Shiloh*, I am indebted to the learned Dr. *Sharpe*, now Master of the *Temple*; who has saved me the Trouble of searching the *Arabic* Lexicographers, as I was about to do. For in p. 6, of that excellent Book of his, on *the Argument for Christianity from the Concessions of Jews, &c.* he derives it from the Arabic *Shála*, to deliver from Danger, Distress, or Destruction. *Shiloh*, therefore, is the DELIVERER OR REDEEMER. *Yikkebáb*, is commonly rendered *gathering*; but *that* is a *Rabbinical* Whim, without much Foundation. Its Root, *Yakáb*, does not occur in the *Rabbinical* Dialect *at all*; and is to be found only *once* more, in the whole Bible, viz. in *Prov. xxx. 17. The Eye that mocketh at his Father, and despiseth to OBEY* * *his Mother, the Ravens of the Valley* * *Likkehath.*

Chap.XIV. *shall pick it out, and the young Eagles shall eat it.* Where the first Clause of the Verse *plainly* shews the true Meaning of the second Clause to be — *to obey.* Accordingly *significatio ejus* (says *Marius à Calasio*) *est, Obtemperavit, Obedivit.* Not that much Hurt would be done, if we used the Rabbinical Word *Gathering*, provided we annex the Idea of *gathering under the same Standard, in token of Obedience.** So that, upon the Whole, no one Word comes so nigh to the Force of the Original, as our English Word CONVERSION, as expressive of a Man's being *turned* to a particular Sect of Religion. I would, therefore, *thus* Paraphrase this famous Text. “Whereas, so many of the *other* Tribes shall join in *Jeroboam's* “Revolt, both from the *Law*, and from “God's *Theocratic* Protection, — *Judah* — “the *laudable* *Judah* — shall keep its Al- “legiance to *both*, 'till that great Re- “deemer

* This Verb *Yakah* occurs in the same Sense in the *Arabic*; where the Verb *Waki*, derived from the Hebrew *Yakah*, signifies the same Thing. This Derivation is conformable to those usual Changes of the *Awi*, which every *Smatterer* in the *Arabic* Language, must, of course, be acquainted with.

- “ deemer shall come, to whom, all the Chap.XIV.
 “ Heathen People shall be *converted*, and
 “ united together in one Faith.

But before I quite conclude this Topic, I must speak a short Word to that Expression — *from between his Feet*, about which Writers have given themselves so much Trouble. Now, let us only consider, that in *all* Languages, *Poetry* is, from the necessary Nature of the Thing, more difficult to understand, than plain downright Prose. This trite Observation holds most eminently true, in the *Holy* Language: And more especially so, in the dying Speech of this great Patriarch *Jacob*; who seems, as it were, to have poured out his whole Soul in it; for he died the Moment the last Words were out of his Mouth, as we read in the last Verse of this Chapter. But notwithstanding this, he delivered this Speech, in a Style sublimer far than any *Pindarics*, or than *Pindar* could possibly be *capable* of writing. A most noble Instance, this, of that calm, sublime, and truly heroic Fortitude, with which a Rational Faith shall enable

§ 15.
 Explication
 of — *from between his Feet*,

Chap. XIV. enable an honest Man, to encounter the
 § 15. last Pangs of Death. But now, notwithstanding the unequalled *Sublimity*, and of course *Difficulty*, of the Biblical Hebrew Poetry, and particularly *here*; — still, it has this vast Advantage over all *other* Poetry, that each of those Periods of it, which we commonly include in a separate Verse, consists of two Parts; the one of which is generally a beautiful Reduplication of the Sense of the *other*: So that if you do but understand *one* of the two Clauses, you *have* the other of course. There is hardly a Verse in any of the Old Testament Poetry, the *Psalms* especially, that is NOT an Instance of this. Upon the Whole, therefore, the Clause — *from between his Feet*, — means no more than — *from him*. And it would have been the same Thing *to us*, if the Patriarch had *transposed* the two Words *Sceptre* and *Law-giver*, and expressed himself *thus*.
 “ The Law-giver shall not depart from
 “ *Judah*, nor the Sceptre from between
 “ his Feet, until *Shiloh* come, &c.” I dwell upon this the more, because it seems to be, from the want of considering this
 Property

Property of the sacred Poetry, that Wri- Chap. XIV.
 ters have given themselves so much learn- § 15.
 ed Trouble, about a Clause so easy and
 plain *in itself*. This, which we make but
one Verse of, in our Translation, is yet *two*
 distinct Clauses in itself: And the same
 Observation holds good in this latter Clause,
 — *until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the*
gathering of the People be. For how could
 HE have been a *Shiloh* or a *Deliverer* to
 the Gentiles, from their Sins: If the Gen-
 tiles had not been gathered together into
 Obedience to *him*? And how could the
 Gentiles have done *that*, if HE who was
 the *Shiloh* or Deliverer, had not first given
them, both the *Grace* to do so, and the
Means of doing it? * Come we now back
 again, to confirm what had been laid
 down (concerning the general Scheme of
 Redemption) from a most important,
 though lamentably misconstrued Passage,
 in the Writings of St. Paul.

C H A P.

* Here the Reader is desired, to turn back to
 Page 331, where an Observation, of considerable Im-
 portance towards the ridding this Text of all Diffi-
 culty, was inserted in the Note, by Mistake, for it
 properly belongs to *this* Place.

C H A P. XV.

*The foregoing View of the Christian Scheme,
confirmed by St. Paul, in Rom. ch. xi.*

§ I.
The 24 first
Verses para-
phrased.

LET us now see, how well this Reasoning, and this *Ideal* Scene of Things (as many may think it, who can believe nothing but what they *see*) let us next observe, I say, how well it agrees with St. *Paul's* View of the general Scheme of Redemption, as we find it laid down in that most *Seraphic* Chapter, the eleventh to the *Romans*. In v. 1, he tells us, that God has neither *finally* nor *totally* cast off his old peculiar People of *Israel*. Not *totally*; because some of the Jews had been converted to the Faith. And this is the Purport of the first six Verses. In the 7th we read, that *though Israel* [in general] *has not obtained that which he seeketh for*; [which is, Salvation through the Means of the old Abrogated Law] but [yet] the *Election hath obtained it*. [Meaning those Israelites, who had been called into the Church, and obeyed that Call; these — met with better Success;

cess; and obtained that Salvation, which Chap. XV. was missed of by the others.] *And the rest were blinded.* [And disobeyed the Call.] And this Blindness of theirs, the Apostle continues to descant on, to the End of v. 10. Then in the next, v. 11, he goes on to tell us, that as they have not *totally*, so neither shall they *finally* fall. *I say then, Have they [so] stumbled that they should fall [for ever?] God forbid, but rather thro' [the Means of] their [temporary] fall, Salvation [the same here as Conversion] is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to Jealousy.* [And Emulation, by the Example of the Gentiles Compliance.] *I say, to provoke, or incite them also, in Ages to come, to hearken to the same Call. V. 12, Now if the Fall of them be [thus] become the [spiritual] Riches of the Gentiles: How much more [in Ages yet to come, shall] their Fullness?* [enrich the whole Body of the Christian Church, with such an unanswerable Proof of its Divinity, as the Completion of this two-fold Prophecy, shall then become.] In the twelve next Verses, or down to the End of v. 24, the Apostle only enlarges himself

Chap .XV. self upon the same Topic, in a most beautiful Manner, by the Similitude of the *Garden Olive*, and the *wild* one, and their Buds or Branches.* And he speaks there in too plain a Manner, to need either *Paraphrase* or *Comment*. But then — from v. 24, to the End of his Discourse upon this Subject, which (exclusive of the *Peroration* in the three last Verses of the Chapter) ends with v. 32 : I say, in all this Part of the Chapter, we meet with sufficient Reason to complain for want of both ; for I confess, my own
Mind

* From whence too, the Apostle seems both to *foresee*, and *condemn* that barbarous and abominable ill Treatment these unhappy People have met with, for their religious Tenets, in almost all Ages [*see Basnage*] in Christian Countries especially ; ever since the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. A fine *Encomium* this, upon all *Persecution* for Religious Opinions, among Christians ; when we are here forbid even to *boast* ourselves against the *Jewish Branches* (v. 15) much more — to *persecute* them. But don't let us forget, that 'tis one thing to *tolerate*, and another to *cherish* and *embrace*. Christian Charity may indeed oblige me to give a poor lame Brother a *Cast*, by letting *him* ride behind *me* ; but 'tis not fit that such an one *should* ride foremost ; and oblige *me* to mount behind upon the *Crupper*, as long as I can keep a good Seat upon my own Saddle.

Mind could never receive the least Satisfac- Chap. XV.
tion, either from such *Comments* or
Paraphrases, as it ever yet fell into *my*
way to consult: And I shall therefore
make but small Apology, for offering my
own Sense of the Matter.

V. 25. *For I would not, Brethren, that
ye should be ignorant of this Mystery (lest ye
should be wise in your own Conceits) [and
grow haughty on Account of your Exal-
tation into the Favour of God, while the
poor unhappy Jews are, for the present,
quite cast out of it] that Blindness, in part,
is happened to Israel [only] untill the Full-
ness [or full Body of the] Gentiles [shall]
be come in- [to the Pale of the Church.]*
V. 26. *And so [as soon as this great Event
shall be brought about] all Israel shall be
saved: As it is written, There shall come
out of Sion the Deliverer, * and shall turn
away*

§ 2.
Paraphrase
continued,

* The *Deliverer*, observe, is the very literal
Translation of the Word *Shiloh*, 'tis *ὁ παλιος* :
And I lay great *Stress* upon this Observation. The
Apostle quotes here *Is. lix. 20*, where the Hebrew
Goël is exactly tantamount to the Word *Shiloh* :
Which is a kind of an *antiquated* Word.

Chap. XV. *away Ungodliness from Jacob. V. 27. For*
 § 2. *this is my Covenant [hereafter to be accomplished] unto them [at the Time] when I shall take away their Sins. [By effectually calling them into the Church, and accepting of their Repentance.]*

So far we are pretty clear. But, here comes the Difficulty; contained in the *first* Part of the following, or 28th v. for the latter Part is easy enough. *V. 28. As concerning the Gospel, they are Enemies for YOUR SAKE: But as touching the Election, they are beloved for the Fathers sakes.* Now, — the Question here is, — in what Sense can the Jews be properly said, to be Enemies for *our* sakes, or, for the Benefit and Advantage of *us*, the Gentile Nations of the World? Some say, “because the
 “Heathens reaped the Advantage of having the Gospel brought to them, by
 “those Teachers whom the Jews rejected
 “and dispersed by Persecution.” Why, ’tis very true, that soon after our Lord’s Ascension, when *there was a great Persecution* [Acts viii. 1, 4.] *against the Church which was at Jerusalem*, the new Christians, *were all scattered abroad throughout the Regions of Judea*

Judæa and Samaria, except the Apostles. And Chap. XV. they that were scattered abroad went every § 2, where preaching the Word. That is, every where in *Judæa and Samaria*; a Tract of Land not above twice as big as *Yorkshire*; and where there were no Gentiles, but a few Roman Soldiers and Tax-gatherers. Of what use then was such a Dispersion, to the *great Gentile World*? Nor can we suppose that the Zeal of the Apostles wanted *driving*, when they were always so ready *to go*. Is it not more natural to suppose, that they entered upon their Missions into Heathen Countries, rather in Obedience to our Lord's last Commands to them, before his Ascension, to go and teach and baptize all Nations? Surely, when we sit down to interpret those Scriptures that relate to the great and comprehensive Scheme of Redemption in general, we should endeavour to avoid such a narrow purblind View of the great System of Things, as makes us see only a few Inches beyond our Noses. 'Tis plain then, that *this* Construction of the Words will never do.

A a

And

Chap. XV.

§ 3.
False Inter-
pretation no-
ticed.

And what can be more weak than another Sense more *generally*, or rather *universally* put upon this Text, that. "God called in the Gentiles, *in the room* of the Jews, or, only because the Jews themselves would not come in." Therefore, I suppose, that Heaven might not go quite unpeopled, and the divine Wisdom be quite baffled and disappointed, it took up with such Company as could be got together upon the Emergency, and called in the Gentiles, in the stead of the Jews, who had refused the Invitation. This Notion seems to imply one of these Absurdities, at least, if not both; either — that there was such a want of *Elbow-room* in the Blissful State, that it could not have held the Jews and Gentiles both; or at least it hints, as if the prodigious Body of the Gentile World, would all have been left in the Lurch, if the Jews had but done *their* Duty, and accepted the Call. And yet, such seems to be the plain Sense of the Stream of Interpreters; and I am sorry to say, that even Mr. *Locke himself*, gives no other Interpretation of this Text. "The Jews are rejected, says
" he

“ he, from being the People of God, Chap. XV.
 “ that you Gentiles may be taken in, to
 “ be the People of God *in their room.*”
 Pardon me then, if I presume rather to
 take the Words in the following Sense.
 “ God, who foresees all future Events,
 “ as well as the future *Dispositions* and
 “ *Inclinations* of the free Hearts and Wills
 “ of his Creatures ; and can, by his Wis-
 “ dom make them *all* of use, to effect
 “ his own wise and gracious Ends and
 “ Purposes ; *He* chose for his peculiar
 “ People, and the Keepers of the sacred
 “ Records [for we must never separate
 “ these two] he chose, I say, such a Na-
 “ tion, as he foresaw, would, by a gross
 “ and wilful Abuse of their own Free-
 “ will, reject the Christian Faith, and
 “ stick to their old Law. All which he
 “ foreknew, would turn to the greatest
 “ Advantage of you Gentiles ; by fixing
 “ and ascertaining, beyond all possible
 “ Doubt, the Authenticity of those sacred
 “ Records, upon which the Edifice of
 “ the Gospel must be erected ; whereby
 “ the total Conversion of the Gentile
 “ World, should in due Time be effected,

Chap. XV. “ by a rational Conviction founded upon
 “ Evidence as firm as a Rock: And
 “ whereby, even the Jews *themselves*,
 “ shall also, at last, be convinced and
 “ turn to the Gospel.”

§ 4.
 Paraphrase
 continued.

Take this Clue in your Hand, and the other four Verses, to the End of v. 32, will be plain and easy enough. As thus. V. 28, latter Part. *But as touching the Election*, they are [still] *beloved for the Fathers sakes*. [Or for the sakes of those worthy Patriarchs, their Ancestors, upon whose Account God pitched upon *them* to be his chosen Seed. V. 29. *For the Gifts and Calling of God* [to that Nation] *are* [all] *without* [*Repentance* [on the Part of God, who gave them.] For though God has, indeed, rejected the Jews, for the present, or rather — suffered *them* to reject themselves; still, — he does not, in a kind of angry Fit, *repent* of the Promises made to the Patriarchs, or Fathers of the Jews, so as to reverse his Intentions, and to break his Word (as *Men* are apt to do, when they are provoked by any unexpected Ill-usage.) No; he will

will certainly fulfil *all his Promises*, in Chap. XV. good Time, by receiving the Jews *at last*.

V. 30. For as ye [Gentiles] in Times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained [the] Mercy of being converted and received into the Church] through [the necessary instrumental Means of] their unbelief: V. 31. Even so have these [Jews] also now not believed [not to their utter Perdition, but] that through your Mercy [not through any Mercy to be shewed by you to them; but through that Mercy which God has shewed upon you, in your Conversion now, and will more amply shew in you total Conversion hereafter.] They also [in that due Time, when the Fullness of the Gentiles be come in] may obtain [the] Mercy. [of Conversion; by being no longer able to withstand the Evidence of the Gospel, which will then be so unanswerably evinced, by this great Event, so clearly foretold in Scripture, more especially by St. Paul in this Chapter.] V. 32. For God hath concluded them all in Unbelief [all in their several Turns; the Gentiles first, and then the Jews] that he might [by this wonderful Stroke of

Chap. XV. Heavenly Politics,—at Length] *have Mercy upon all.* [By making, at last, the whole Body of Mankind, both Jew and Gentile also, happy in the Profession of Christianity.] * And this seems to be a just and fair Portrait, in Miniature, of God's Wisdom, displayed in that general Scheme of Redemption; the View of which might well inspire the great Apostle, with that Rapturous Exclamation, with which he concludes this most *Seraphic* Chapter. *Oh the*

* *Quære* whether this future State of the Christian Church, after the *Fullness of the Gentiles shall be come in*, and the Jews shall also be converted, and make *one Fold*, under the ONE SHEPHERD; *Quære*, I say, whether this State of Christianity, be not, in Fact, that *Millennium* of which we have heard so much? 'Tis well known that the ancientest Christian Fathers, founded the Notion of a *Millennium*, on Apostolical Tradition. And though some of those early Heretics, who were as detestable Wretches, ALMOST, as our *Moravians* are now, — did, indeed, bring this Doctrine into Disrepute, by the Abuses *they* made of it, — still, *that* Objection is but little to the Purpose; 'tis infinitely weighed down by Apostolical Tradition, as well as by St. *John*, in *Rev.* Chap. 20. I have not taken Time to consider of this Point, at large: But only start it to beg that my own private Friends, would communicate their Thoughts to me, upon this curious and entertaining Subject.

*the Depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom Chap. XV.
and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable
are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding
out! For who hath known the Mind of the
Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Or
who hath first given to him, and it shall be
recompensed to him again? For of him, and
through him, and to him, are all Things:
To whom be Glory for ever. Amen.*

So much for my brief and general
View of the great Scheme of Redemp-
tion: And I shall only add a few Re-
marks upon the Whole. In the first
Place then, all this seeming Digression,
both concerning the true Sense of the
Parables, and the universal Plan of the
Christian Gospel; both these, I say, are
Lines that directly and visibly tend, from
the *Circumference* to the *Centre* of my
Plan; and fall in with, and complete the
Whole: By evincing, that from the *Fall
of Man*, down to the present Times, it
ever *has* been, — and from the present
Time, to the End of *all* Time, it ever
will be, — the same uniform End of the

§ 5.

1st Remark.
This agrees
with our Ra-
tionale.

Chap. XV. Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to draw
Good from out of Evil.

§ 6.

2d Remark.
 No Predesti-
 nation want-
 ed here.

My second Remark is, that in all this Scheme, which is far enough from being *mine*, because you plainly see, 'tis St. Paul's: In all this Scheme, I say, we can no more find any Occasion for *Predestination*, than we can find *Predestination* itself, in the Scriptures *rationaly* interpreted. And the Scriptures *irrationally* explained, are no longer *Scriptures*, but Human Whimsies and Follies. If Mr. *Whitfield* wants to re-establish this Doctrine, I would advise him (instead of torturing the Christian Scriptures in vain, to make them confess more than they know) I would advise him to sit down, and carefully Study *Mahomet's Alcoran*: For I can assure him, he will meet with more Success in his Predestinarian Lucubrations, from reading the *Alcoran*, than ever he will in searching the Bible for that Doctrine. Don't let him be discouraged because the *Alcoran* is written in a crabbed Sort of a Language, for I can assure him, that that Language *has*
 its

its Beauties, and contains much useful Chap. XV. Knowledge.

Thirdly, and lastly. Having observed upon the *Mosaic* System, that there is no assignable Period, between *Moses* and *Christ*, in which the Jewish Nation could possibly have received their Law at first, in case it had really been an Imposture; so, I say the same again, with Regard to the *Christian* Dispensation. Let any Infidel name to me *that* Period of Time, from the Crucifixion of *Christ*, down to this very Day, in which the Christian Religion could *possibly* have been at *first* received, had it really been an Imposture. For, Christianity *now* exists, and therefore, most certainly, it had a Beginning, at some certain Time or other, whatever that Time was. Of all Infidels, *Tindal* came the nearest to the Mark. He tells us that Christianity is *as old as the Creation*. And 'twas *specially well shot* for an Infidel; so well shot, that while he, poor Soul, was only bent upon a little Knavery or so, he narrowly missed of blundering into Truth and common Sense. For out of
more

§ 7.
3d Remark.
General
Proof of
Christianity.

Chap. XV. more than 5700 Years, he made a Blunder

§ 7. of only five Days. For *Adam* was created on the sixth Day; and the Seeds, at least, of Christian Revelation, were given to *Adam*, immediately after his Creation. However, we'll let that pass; for in the present Case, I only speak as to the Christian Dispensation, commonly so called. Now therefore, if the Christian Religion began at *that* Time, and in *that* Manner, that the Gospels relate; why then, — all is natural, plain, and easy. And we should *all* think so too, if the Gospel did not bear a little too hard upon *Whoring* and *Drinking*, and two or three *other* favourite Diversions of Mankind. *This* is the *true* Secret, that makes the Enemies of the Christian Religion, wink and goggle at the Light of the Gospel, like so many *Owls* in open Sunshine. But, if People *will* shut their Eyes; and then quarrel at Divine Revelation, because they can't see, — who can help it? But to return. If Christianity really were an Imposture, flily put upon the World; let these Gentlemen fairly tell me, *when* and *where*, and *how* this abominable Cheat began

began *first* to be broached, and with such Chap. XV.
 amazing Success, that it has now nearly § 7.
 overspread the Earth ; and (what is wonderful strange) it has *ever* flourished *most*,
 in those Countries that abounded *most* with
Learning, Arts, and Sagacity ; and, in one
 Word, with every Qualification requisite
 to *detect* and *expose* a Cheat. * How came
 this Cheat, in so short a Time, to meet
 with so many hearty Friends ; when it is
 notorious, that it was levelled, at first, a-
 gainst what are commonly the most stub-
 born, and of all Things the *hardest* to be
 rooted out ; I mean, all the old *Religious*
Prejudices, both of Jews and Greeks ; —
 as well as against every Thing that is
 near and dear to human Nature. Are
 Poverty, Contempt, hard and incessant
 Labours, † rewarded with Tortures, and
 the

* When I mentioned Dr. *Sharpe's* Book on the
 Concessions of Adversaries, I should have added
 what Dr. *Lardner* has just written on that Topic,
 who, as a worthy Friend of mine just now informs
 me, has *exhausted* that Subject. But I have not
 yet had Time to peruse the Book myself.

† Some Clergymen are apt to think, that “ some-
 “ thing like this, is their own Case *now adays* : and
 “ they complain too, that when they come to *sue*
 “ for

Chap. XV. the most cruel Deaths, — are these — *Natural Means*? Were these — *Natural Means* to make its first Professors *forsake all they had* for the sake of it? Or, were not a full Knowledge, founded upon a *real, sensible, and ocular* Demonstration of the Grounds of their Faith, and a full Persuasion of their attaining thereby, to the unspeakable and endless Joys of a glorious Immortality, — were not these, I say, rather still *more* natural Means to set them at work, than the Pleasure of being flayed alive, put to the Rack, or grilled upon Gridirons?

§ 8.
Same continued. Ev-
fions pre-
cluded.

Let us then betake ourselves to another Shift, upon this arduous Occasion: Who knows

“ for their Bread, they are hardly under the Protection of the Laws.” But surely, *they* must be very bad Clergy-men, *indeed*, that dare say so. For were a Man to rob me upon the Highway Tomorrow, of my Periwig and new Beaver, I can’t think that there is a *Lay Jury*, in all *England*, but what would oblige the Robber, at *least* to give me a good warm Woollen Night Cap, in lieu of my own Hat and Wig. Nor is the World so wicked yet, but that *all* would be glad to travel the Road that leads to Heaven: — Provided they can but bilk the *Turnpike*, and behave as they please upon the Journey.

knows but that we may meet with better Chap. XV.
 Success, in Case we put a good confident
 Face upon the Matter, and roundly affirm
 that the Christian Religion was all a Con-
 trivance, hatched at first, by a tacit Agree-
 ment between *Priest-craft* and *King-craft*,
 to keep little Rogues in order, only that
Great ones may enjoy the World in State.
 Why, this is a happy Thought; because
 Religion is *allowed*, on all Hands, to be
 so useful to civil Government, that for
 want of a *true* Religion, it was always
 necessary to vamp up some *false* one or
 other; to the no small Expence of the
 Laity, in pampering the Bowels of so
 many fat voluptuous Priests, who always
 devour the Fat of the Land wherever
 they come. But then, — we are *still* at
 a *Nonplus* again. All this clashes with
 undoubted HISTORY. From whence we
 learn, that Christianity could never be
 contrived between *Priest-craft* and *King-*
craft; these two having been at constant
 Variance, from the Crucifixion of Christ,
 down to the Days of *Constantine the Great*;
 a Space of Time containing 300 Years;
 which was filled up, by the ten bloody
 Persecutions

Chap. XV. Persecutions, with little or *no* Remission between them.* So that during these three first Centuries, the civil Rulers of the World opposed Christianity much more stoutly and cordially, than ever they opposed either *Robbery* or *Murder*; or even *Rebellion* or *High Treason*. And it further appears, from undoubted Histories, written in those very Times, that of all the Professors of Christianity, the *Teachers* of it were persecuted with the greatest Bitterness. 'Tis plain therefore, that those three first Centuries, must stand clear of all Imputation of *Priest-craft*. Soon afterwards indeed, when Prosperity made Men fat and wanton; *then*, the *Mystery of Iniquity* began to work; and *Priest-craft* was conceived: And *Priest-craft*, when it had conceived — brought forth *Popery*. And *Popery* (having received a Hurt in a fierce Quarrel it had, with its two great Foes, called *Scripture* and *Common Sense*) miscarried, and brought forth *Reformation*; and

* Though *Voltaire* has the *unparalleled Impudence* to fly in the Face of *all* the Histories of these Times, and to deny that Christianity was *ever* persecuted at all. I wonder he did not add, that the Edict of *Nantes* was never revoked by *Lewis XIV.*

and has been in a poor dwindling State Chap. XV. ever since. But to return.

I think I have only one more Subterfuge to speak to, and then I have done. The Apostles appealed to their Miraculous Gifts and Powers, as to a Seal set by Heaven itself, to their Divine Commission. Now, suppose we should take Courage, and roundly deny the Matter of Fact; and affirm that, *in Truth*, they had *no* such Miraculous Powers at all. But here, again, we are unhappily entangled in many a thorny Difficulty: Though for Brevity Sake, I shall name but *one*. Can any Man think, that such a Man as St. *Paul*, was capable of such an egregious Folly, as to write an Epistle (in those very pretended Miraculous Times) to the Inhabitants of such a City as *Corinth*; — (a City which still continued to answer the Character that *Tully* had given of it, but a few Years before, — of being *totius Græciæ lumen & Decus*, the Light and Glory of all *Greece*.) I say, can it be thought that St. *Paul* would have sat down, and gravely written Directions to
his

§ 9.
Early *miraculous Powers* undeniable.

Chap. XV. his Converts there, how to use their Miraculous Gifts to the best Edification, and particularly their Gift of speaking Foreign Languages by Inspiration ;—when at the same Time, he well knew they were utterly destitute of all such Miraculous Gifts? What would the sagacious Greeks of that polite City, and famous Seat of Learning, have thought of their great Apostle *then*? Let us once more suppose a similar Case of our own. What d'ye imagin, that even Mr. *Whitfield's* deluded Followers would think of *him now*, were he to send circular Letters to all those illiterate *Mechanics*, who supply his Place in the *Methodist* Meeting-Houses up and down the Country, — to caution all those worthy Spiritual Guides, *not to be too free of their Latin, Greek, Hebrew, or Arabic ; but to be contented with plain English*. I ask, what would *they* think, or what should all *we* think, of such a Caution : And a Caution too, given to Men who can speak to so little Purpose, in any one known Language upon Earth : And perhaps hardly ever heard of
of

of any other Language, save only their Chap. XV.
own Mother Tongue.*

But the general Defence of Christianity
is an endless Theme. When once a
Man has got into it, there is hardly any
knowing where to end. A thinking Man
is no sooner engaged in it, than, as the
Son of *Sirach* expresses it, *lo his Brook be-*
comes a River, and his River becomes a Sea.
Against such Arguments as these, our Deists
are perpetually kicking their Feet. But

§ 10.
Challenge to
Infidels.

B b they

* But *wheresoever the Carcase is, there will the*
Eagles be gathered together. Where there are Fools,
there will always be Knaves to play upon them.
Accordingly, there is, in my Neighbourhood, an
honest *Baker*, who preaches to large Audiences of
these People: And with such Success too, that he
makes them all groan piteously; and perhaps not
without *some* sort of Reason. But it happens a little
unluckily, that this same *Baker* is said to have suf-
fered the Penalties of the Law, for Short-weight in
Bread of his own baking. If it be so, 'tis happy for
this *honest Baker*, that our Statutes lay no kind of
Penalty upon Short-weight in *Divinity*. But I
would charitably hope, that the whole Report is
false and malicious; that Foreigners may have no
room to sneer upon the Laws of *England*, for pay-
ing less Regard to the Bread of Life, than they do
to the Weight of a Twopenny Loaf.

Chap. XV. they will, to their Sorrow, always find
§ 10. (and always have found) that what our Saviour told St. *Paul*, in the Vision at *Damascus*, by which he was converted ;—
“ that Christianity is armed, at all Points,
“ with Spikes of Iron : Against which,
“ the more stoutly a Man kicks, the
“ more sorely will he hurt his own
“ Shins.” But as I *must* leave off some time or other, I shall close this Topic, with a very modest and reasonable Request to the Enemies of Christianity, — and which I am sure their known Sincerity and Candour will indulge me in, For as these Gentlemen are perpetually calling out upon the Christian Clergy, for the Solution of *this* and *that* and *t’other* Difficulty, under which the Christian Scheme seems to *them* to labour ; they will of course, be so candid, as to allow *me*, in my Turn, to propound a certain Difficulty to *them*, under which their free thinking Notions, seem to me to labour and groan *most heavily*. ’Tis only the same I spoke of just now ; let them answer *that*, and then I shall have done, and will trouble them no more. Let
them

them then give me a rational Account, Chap. XV.
 “ by what *Means*, and at what particular § 10.
 “ *Time*, the Christian Gospel, — *supposing*
 “ *it to be an Imposture*, could FIRST have
 “ been imposed upon the World, with
 “ such Success, as to have gained *any*
 “ *Profelytes* AT ALL. Especially in that
 “ learned, curious, and inquisitive Age,
 “ the *Augustan* Age; an Age which they
 “ themselves contend, was the most glo-
 “ rious Age, that Arts and Sciences ever
 “ flourished in.” But I lay down these
few Preliminaries; — their Solution of this
 Problem must comport with common
 Sense; — with the known Attributes or
 Qualities of Human Nature, — and with
 those valuable Remains of Antiquity, that
 have found their Way down to *us* of this
 present Age. That is, in few Words, —
 let them give me fairly, the *How*, the
Where, and the *When* — this Fraud was
 contrived, if such Fraud ever existed.
 That done, I hereby promise them, upon
 my Word and Honour, that if I live to
 enjoy the Benefit of their brighter Light,
 and better Information, — I will do all I
 can, for the Honour and Glory of *their*

Chap. XV. Cause, in Return. And that is, — that

§ 10. *old, and lame, and weak, and decrepid, as I am ; I will at least play the Part of a Man of Honour, and once more mount my Pulpit again (though I fear it must be upon my Crutches, if I do so) and I will from thence renounce and recant every Syllable of the Christian Doctrine, that I ever preached from thence. But then,— the Gauntlet I have here thrown down, must be taken up with all possible Haste and Speed : For as I have been a long Time labouring on the wrong Side of my grand Climacteric, I must have done studying very soon. And in good Truth 'tis high Time I should : For I am already grown so Stupid, Old, and Purblind, that sometimes I have much ado to distinguish the Nib of a Pen from the Point of a Needle. So that if none of these Gentlemen soon accept of my Challenge, I shall venture to write up, over my Study Door, — *Hic — cæstus Artemque repono*. But so much for this : I should now pass on to my general Conclusion ; but must first add a short Word. For*

I should

I should have observed, in its proper Place, that Mr. Charles's making the Word *Mechokék* in Gen. xlix. 10, to signify *Moses*, and the *Sceptre* to be the *Theocracy*, or Divine Government of the Jews; is liable however, to one seeming Objection, which yet in Fact, only adds new Light and Strength to it. 'Tis this. "If *Moses* be meant here to be the *Mechokék* or Lawgiver, the Prophecy remains yet unfulfilled: Since *Moses* is not yet departed from the Jews: As they do still most zealously retain the Law." I answer. They do, indeed, retain and read in their Synagogues, Copies of the Law, and thereby bear Testimony to the *Authenticity* of it. But GOD HIMSELF has taken the Law itself from them; though they stubbornly retain written Copies of it, and stick to it as much as they can. But how is that? Do they practice their Law? No. They neither do nor can practice it. Their Dispersion prevents that, as I have demonstrated, at large, above; in Chap. XIII. Sect. 18. So that you see *Moses* actually is departed from them. You'll say, perhaps, that according to all this, *Moses* de-

Chap. XV.
§ 11.
Postscript concerning Gen. xlix. 10.

Chap. XV. parted from them, during the *Captivity*;

§ 11. when they were as much inhibited from their *local* Worship and Services, as they are *now*. I answer; that a Provision against that Objection, was fully made in their *Law itself*; when such an Intermision of their *local* Services was *foretold*, as a Punishment for those Sins which they should commit. But the *Babylonish* Captivity brings into my Mind, something that strongly confirms Mr. *Charles's* Explication of the *Sceptre* to be — the *Theocracy*. 'Tis well known to Divines, what great but unsuccessful Pains have been taken to shew, that “ the Sceptre (in the “ Sense of *Civil Government*) *did not de-* “ part from *Judah* during the *Babylonish* “ Captivity : Since, if it had, this famous “ Prophecy had been defeated.” But, how do they shew it? What wretched Work do they *all* make of it? They endeavour to save the Credit of the Prophecy, by telling us, that some Relicts of civil Power were left, by the *Babylonians*, in the Hands of him who was called the *Prince* or *Chief of the Captivity*. But what Sort of a Sceptre had HE? What was he, but

but the *Foreman* of a Band of Slaves; to Chap. XV. circulate, perhaps, the Orders of his Superiors to his Brother Captives, and invested, it may be, with some little Power among *them*: But, — certainly liable to Controll, from that *Civil Sceptre*, which the King of *Babylon* carried in his *own Hands only*. But if we suppose with Mr. *Charles*, that the Sceptre was the *Theocracy*, all is *plain* and *easy*. For, the *Theocracy*, that *real Sceptre* (*in the Hands of God*) meant by the Patriarch, did *not* depart from them during the *Captivity*, but followed them *Thither*. For, the *Theocracy*, we know, was carried on, by the Intervention of such inspired Persons, as were called *Prophets*: And we all know that Prophets prophesied in *Babylon*; and of course — the *real Sceptre* was neither *suspended* nor *departed* during the *Captivity*. And thus, the Sceptre that *departed not* from *Judah*, but *adhered* to it, even during the *Captivity* of that Tribe, was the *one* and only *real Sceptre*, that ever *was*. All other Sceptres, are but Ensigns of Mock Majesty, in Comparison to the Sceptre wielded by *him*, in whose Hands

§ II.

Chap. XV. are *the Hearts of Kings and Princes*. And

§ 11. we must, in all Cases, cautiously distinguish, between a TEMPORARY SUSPENSION and a TOTAL DEPARTURE of the *Theocracy*, that true *Shévet* or Sceptre spoken of by the great *Patriarch*. Thus for Instance, it was suspended for *many Years*, before the Incarnation; that the *Return* of it, in the usual *Form* of *Prophecy*, before the Birth of *John Baptist*, and our *Lord's Incarnation*, — that the *Return* of it, I say, in that glorious *Period*, * might become the more remarkable and illustrious; that it might fulfil the Prophecies that foretold it; — and serve to open the Eyes, and clear the Eyesight, of all those who were now *looking for Redemption in Jerusalem* — and the *coming of him* who was the *Desire of all Nations*. The great Bishop *Sherlock*, who had a Soul as much superior both to *Disimulation* and *Vanity*, as his vast *Genius* was above the common Race of Men, — frankly confesses [Differt. 3. p. 345, 6. Edit. 6.] that there REALLY IS a Difficulty here. And

* Turn to *Malachi* iii. 1. *Joel* ii. 28. *Matt.* xi. 12. *Hagg.* ii. 7. *Luke* ii. 38.

And so, in good Truth, *he found*. For, Chap. XV. notwithstanding all he there says, the § II. CIVIL Sceptre was evidently in the Hands of the King of *Babylon*. And though many of the *Jews* were so well settled there in *Ease and Plenty*, yet they were Slaves still; *Slavery*, in those Eastern Countries, being very compatible with *Ease and Plenty*, both *then* and *now*. There are now Slaves in *Indostan*, * richer than most Nobility here in *Europe*. For, 'tis not *Poverty*, but *Subjection*, that makes a Man a Slave. Therefore, 'tis plain at last, that this unnoticed Divine, Mr. *Charles*, (so long buried in a little, mean, scanty Vicarage, that would *starve a Rat*) has thrown more Light upon this now *Illustrious* Text, than any one Christian Writer, since the Days of the Apostles.

CON-

* A Part of this same old *Affyrian* Empire; still retaining (like the rest of these Eastern Nations) all their ancient civil Customs, Manners, and *Genius*; save only their *Mahometanism*, which was forced upon them by the *Tartars*, under *Tamerlane* (properly *Timur Beg*, i. e. the *Iron Lord*) the Head of the *present*, or perhaps *late*, *Mogul* or *Tartar* Family.

CONCLUSION.*

§ I.
Original Sin,
why denied
by some.

AND thus, I hope, the Reader has been, at last, safely conducted thro' this short, but abstruse and difficult Inquiry, down to the general Conclusion at first aimed at; which was, — “ that the
“ literal Doctrine of Original Sin, contains nothing in it that is contrary to
“ Human Reason: But that God's Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice, stand fully
“ vindicated, in permitting the Fall of
“ *Adam*, and the subsequent Corruption
“ of our Human Nature, to have happened at the Instigation of Satan.” 'Tis very true, that there *have been*, and perhaps *still are*, some *Heretics*, who deny that there is any such Doctrine at all to be found in the Scriptures. † But what then?

* The Reader will please to observe, that this Conclusion was written, with a View to the twelve first Chapters *only*; which wholly relate to the Subject of *Original Sin*. The other three Chapters, (the 13th, 14th and 15th) were added *very lately*; and *many Years* after the rest of the Book was finished.

† But the shrewdest Attack upon this Doctrine, was from the late Dr. *Taylor of Norwich*; a Divine
of

then? Are there not also among us, here in *England*, some honest Men, who can't see any such thing in the Scriptures, as the Institution of either of the two Sacraments? Are there not others, who can see nothing *there*, that makes against their own gross Idolatry;—Idolatry, more gross in sundry Respects, than could well be charged upon the ancient Heathens of *Greece* or *Italy*? And are there not among us, several Persons of Parts and Learning, who do (to all Intents and Purposes) maintain, that though it was, visibly, one main Design of one Half of the Scriptures, to keep Men back from Idolatry, yet,—that the other Half of them was written, and by the same Spirit too, that indited the first, principally with

of the Separation, and a Man of considerable Learning and Abilities, as well as great seeming Candor. But I think he has been fully answered by Mr. *Wesley*; whose good Learning, and excellent natural Talents, deserve *well* to be *always* engaged in a better Cause than that of *Methodism*. But why do I name *any* thing written in Defence of this Doctrine, when the great BISHOP SHERLOCK's Dissertations on this Subject, annexed to his *Discourses on Prophecy*, are, or ought to be, in every Man's Hands.

with a View to drive Men *into* Idolatry, by obliging them to pay divine Worship to a certain Creature called Jesus Christ? In Fact, there is nothing that conceited, bold, and desperate Men, are not capable of affirming or denying of the Scripture, in Defence of a distressed Cause, which they, perhaps, are resolved to defend at all Events. And as to the Doctrine of *Original Sin*, though here and there a Christian *Heretic* can't see it, yet it stands in the Bible in so plain and clear a Light, that I am confident, that were that Book shewn to a *Turk* or a *Moor*, he'd see it there as plainly as I do. Nor can I, for my Part, ever believe, that any *Heretic* would have denied it, if he could but have solved it. But 'tis always natural, as we observed above, to endeavour to cut the Knot, that wo'nt be untied.

§ 2.
Nature of
this Solution.

As to the Solution here offered, — the Design of the whole (which 'tis hoped has in some Measure answered the Intention) was, to inculcate worthier Notions of Religion, both natural and revealed, than some Men have been apt to entertain,

tain, for Want of perceiving the Wisdom, Beauty, and Harmony of that Dispensation, which has been the Subject of the foregoing Pages. The Solution of the main Question, is simple and plain enough in itself; and lies in a pretty narrow Compass. But still, when I came to examine things to the Bottom, I found I had some preliminary Difficulties, of no small Consequence, that stood in need of being removed; as well as a good Number of very knotty Objections, that were afterwards to be cleared up. But, I am in Hopes, that the handling of these, has given an Opportunity to make the Christian System *in general*, appear in somewhat a more rational Light, as well as to be more uniform and consistent with itself, than it has sometimes been represented. And this makes me a little more sanguine in my Hopes, that this Difficulty has, in Fact, been solved. For, 'tis a sure and certain Rule, that when God provides Remedies for *any* Evil, nothing can prevent the Efficacy of those Remedies, but the Want of our right Application of them: *That* Application being always, and for the wisest

wisest Reasons, left to ourselves. Now, both the Scriptures themselves, and the whole Body of the Catholic Church, are clear in this, — that *Christ* is opposed to *Adam*, as his direct *Antithesis*: Which is, in other Words, as much as to say, that Christian Revelation is, professedly, the *Antidote* to the Poison of Original Sin. Consequently, it must, when rightly understood, and properly applied, furnish us also with sufficient *Antidotes* (if you'll pardon the Expression) to all Objections also, that can be made, to the Wisdom, Goodness, and Justice of God, in that Grand and Fundamental Dispensation, the Fall of Man. And if in the present Inquiry, the Christian Dispensation has been shown, to be so effectual an Antidote to the Poison of the Fall, as thereby infinitely to improve and benefit the Constitution of Mankind, what should hinder our concluding the Difficulty to be effectually solved; and this great Stumbling Block removed?

§ 3.
Apology for
it.

In the mean Time, it must be ingenuously confessed, that as we have been obliged,

obliged, in the Course of this Disquisition, to handle a pretty great Variety of Matter, and generally speaking, of *new* Matter too; no doubt can be made, but that a great many Omissions, Faults, and Inaccuracies, must have happened in this Work, (small as it is) that have but too easily escaped the partial and parental Eye of the Author. All which, I hope, will be candidly placed to the Account of human Infirmary, rather than to any Want of Industry or Integrity. And I publish these Sheets in my Life Time, with a View to retract any such Mistakes, as my Friends shall fairly and candidly convince me of. For the sole Point I aim at, is, the Discovery of Truth; and if there be any one Species of human Folly, that I do most heartily hate and despise, 'tis that fatal Pride which Men are generally apt to take, in maintaining stoutly, and at all Events, that Ground upon which they have once set their Foot. But to return.

I must here again remind my Reader, of what I have once or twice observed before; that in all Attempts to reconcile any
Divine

§ 4.
Sufficient, if
the Solution
be but *possi-
ble*.

Divine Dispensation to human Reason, enough will be done to gain the Point, if we can but arrive at a bare *Possibility*, that the Case *may* be so or so, *for ought that we know to the contrary*. For, if a *possible* Reason can be assigned, for *any* Measures that are taken in *any* Case, 'tis certain that those Measures can no longer stand chargeable with being *contrary to all Reason*. But then,—in order to make the assigned Reason a *possible* one, it must certainly be, in all Points, consistent with itself, fit to solve the *Phænomenon* in Question, and suitable to the known Nature and Properties of that Agent, whose Wisdom and Equity we undertake to vindicate: Because otherwise, the Reason assigned as a *possible one*, will be no Reason at all, as is most evident. If therefore we can but arrive at a *Possibility* in these Cases, the Point will be so far gained, as effectually to stop the Mouth of Infidelity. But, if we can but get one Step further, so as to reach up to *any* Degree of a *Probability*, the Satisfaction will be still *greater*, and the Mind will then be enabled, to rest in more or less Ease, and to be more or less

less free from all Scruple and Difficulty, in Proportion to the greater or less Degree of that Probability. And further than this, I fear, we shall never be able to go, in the Examination of very many of God's Dispensations.

And in good Truth, we may here set our Hearts at rest; since further than this, no reasonable Man can well *desire* to go. For if in these few Sheets, I may be allowed to have proved any Proposition at all, I think verily I have fully proved this; — that as the Scriptures *have* not, so neither *could* they, nor, with Reverence be it spoken, *ought* they to have abounded in *Rationale's*.* Of course it follows, that our Work is done, as far as the Nature of the Thing will admit of its being done, if, to any Infidel Objections against divine Dispensations, we can but oppose — *bare Possibilities*: And much more if we can but attain to even the Lowest Degree of a *Probability*. Nor is it at all reasonable, in these Cases, to call upon a Man for direct Scripture Authority for all he

§ 5.
And why.

C c

says;

* See Chap. XII. § 26, &c.

says ; for 'tis sufficient if such an Apology be barely *not contrary* to Scripture : And more than sufficient, if the Solution be so far favoured by all Parts of the Christian System, that they shall all seem to point towards it, like Lines to a common Centre : As I hope the Reader does, by this Time, see *some* Reason to think, in Regard to the present Inquiry. “ All
 “ the Assistance, says Bishop *Burnet*, very
 “ judiciously (in treating on this very
 “ Article of Original Sin) that revealed
 “ Religion can receive from *Philosophy*,
 “ is to shew the *Possibility*, or rather *Pro-*
 “ *bability* of any Particulars that are con-
 “ tained in the Scriptures. This is enough
 “ to stop the Mouths of Deists, which is
 “ all the Use that can be made of such
 “ Schemes.” So far Bishop *Burnet* ; and I add, that this is all the Use that was ever intended to be made of the *present* Scheme ; which, whether it amounts to a *Possibility* of being the true Solution, or whether it does not come to some tolerable Degree of even a *Probability*, this must be now left to the Decision of the candid and sagacious Reader. In the
 mean

mean Time, however, give me Leave to add one Observation, that seems to raise our Argument to such a Degree of Probability, as is but little inferior to Certainty. And it is this. That

The Notion of God's permitting Mankind to fall, through the Sin of *Adam*, into their present State of Probation, on Account of some valuable and important Consequences, that are foreseen to accrue from it *Hereafter*; this, I say, is a Notion so analogous to God's *usual* manner of acting, that had it *not* been here put in Practice, it had been a kind of an awkward, strange, and Heterogeneous Deviation from the whole Course of Nature, as far as we can look into it. For the making one State previously necessary to another, of a more noble, compleat, and perfect Kind; is a Dispensation, Scheme, or manner of Acting, that runs through the whole Course of Nature, from first to last; and may, in other Words, be termed *a gradual Progress towards Perfection*. 'Tis true, indeed, that *without* the Fall of *Adam*, our present State might have been

§ 6.

That 'tis Analogous to the whole Course of Nature.

— A gradual Progress in every Thing.

made *previous* to a more perfect one ; but then, 'tis hard to conceive, how, upon any other than the present Plan, it could have been previously *necessary* or *introductory* of such a more perfect State. Of course, such a State as had been simply previous in the *Order of Time*, had still been an Exception to the General Analogy of Nature and Providence, which not only makes one State or Condition of Existence, previous to a subsequent more perfect one, but also previously *Necessary*, *Preparative*, and *Introductory* to it : Which is exactly the Case, as Things now stand, with respect to *our* present State of Probation. Indeed, whether or no this Rule may extend up to *Angelic* Beings, that possess a superior Place, in the great *Ascending* Scale of Nature, we know not : It being as impracticable, without the Aid of Revelation, to look *above* us, as it is for Animals, below the Dignity of the human Race, to look *up to us*. But, — in all Parts of the *Descending* Scale, up as high as to ourselves, the Observation is undeniably true ; and has, accordingly, been often made by others. But, as I
don't

don't remember to have seen it accounted for, and as it is a Point of great Consequence to my Argument, and is in itself a most useful, wise, and beautiful Dispensation ; — it will be far from an impertinent Digression, to look a little into the probable Reasons of the Thing.

As to the Fact itself then ; — this gradual Tendency, from a small and minute Origin, towards certain prescribed Limits of Perfection ; holds equally good, in every Production, both of Nature, Art, and Providence ; as a slight View of each will readily evince. In *Inanimate* Nature, all *Mineral* and *Fossil* Bodies, are allowed by *Naturalists*, to come to be what they are, by that slow and gradual Increase, which they stile a Kind of Vegetation. In the *Vegetable* Creation, properly so called, each *Herb* and *Plant*, and *Tree*, springs from its Seed ; and the Progress is Gradual and Slow, from *Seed* to *Plant*, from *Plant* to *Tree*, then to *Blossom*, and so to *Fruit*. Of similar Nature is the Growth and Progress of the Animal World, from the most trivial Insect, up

§ 7.
Exemplified.

to the Lords of the Creation. And if from the Progress of *Animal Life*, we transfer our Attention to the Growth and Improvement of the *Understanding*; — how gradual, though slow a Progress, do we make, in quest of *any* Art or Science, Learning or Wisdom? From Alphabet and Grammar, we creep slowly on at first, 'till at Length we gradually atchieve the whole Round of human Art and Science. Proceeding as in *Mathematics*, from the Definition of a single Point, 'till at last we gradually rise up to a Comprehension of the vast Expanse of the Universe, and of the wise and wonderful Laws by which it is governed. What thus holds true of Individuals, is equally true of the whole Body of Mankind. Their Skill in Arts and Sciences, though it has indeed, as Dr. *Law* observes, had its *Ebbings* as well as *Flowings*, yet upon the Whole, it has *ever* been increasing. As it would, indeed, be strange if it did *not*, since the Age that is in being, will always have the Advantage of the Practice and Observations of former Ages, to assist them in their Researches, and of course

course to aid them in their Progress towards Perfection. And we are told, that the Kingdom of Heaven itself, that noblest of all the Divine Productions, did once resemble a Grain of *Mustard Seed* for Size; though it is *now*, we see, in so fair a way of overshadowing the whole Globe of the Earth with its Branches. The same Observations are easily extended to the Origin and Growth of States and Empires; as also to the general Civilization of Mankind. So that a *Gradual* Progress towards Perfection, is common, you see, to every Branch, both of Nature, Art, and Providence.

And this Gradual Progress does, as effectually display the Wisdom and Goodness of the great Creator. For, as to the Frame and Constitution of the Natural World, or visible Creation; — we are to consider, that without such a gradual Progress, all must have been, for ever, at a dead silent Stand. So that the Face of Nature, which now every where abounds with Beauty and Variety, and is continually entertaining us with a Succession of

§ 8.
Accounted
for in general.

new Scenes, and a grateful Vicissitude of Seasons ; had then, all been changed into one dull and tedious Identity, more tiresome both to the Eye and Understanding of the Spectator, than a long continued View, of nothing but Sky and Water, is, to the Mariner at Sea. And as to the Works of Art, had all Things been at a Stand, without any Hopes or Possibility of Improvement, — that most exquisite, as well as rational Delight, which results from the happy Success of a Man's Labour and Ingenuity, together with that Complacency, and innocent Self-Approbation, which attends upon every new Discovery and Improvement, had all been cut off ; and those several very material Branches of Happiness, had all been lost to Mankind. Nor could we, without this Progress, have reaped any of that Contentment, Joy, or Satisfaction, that now always attends upon the Acquisition of such *Mental* Endowments, as require Industry, Perseverance, Labour, Toil and Study : Since we can never thoroughly relish those Blessings, how great and valuable soever in themselves, that don't
imply

imply some Difficulty in the Attainment. Nor let us forget, how great a Part of our Enjoyment of such Blessings, results usually, from our comparing what we *have been*, with what we *now are*. So that in one Word, this general Stagnation in the *Natural* and *Rational* Creation, would have been the very Bane of every Species of Happiness, both Sensual and Rational.* For as the Happiness of every Creature *must*, in the Nature of Things, “result from a right Use of its natural Faculties,” ’tis evident, that such a System of Things, as had precluded all gradual Progress towards Perfection, must also have retrenched every Species of Happiness of course; because it would have precluded the Use and Exercise of almost every Natural Faculty in every Creature.

And if we descend more minutely to Particulars, we shall, perchance, find an absolute *Necessity* for this gradual Process. For if we begin so low, as with the Growth of *Minerals* or *Fossils*, we shall

§ 9.
— particularly, as to Animals and Vegetables.

* See that excellent Book, Dr. Law’s Considerations, &c. Part I. p. 12. Edit. 4.

§ 9. I shall find their gradual Formation in the Bowels of the Earth, to be, but the necessary Result of those Laws of Matter and Motion, which are the wisest that can be, and therefore can never be altered, but for the worse. As to *Vegetables*, that the manner of *their* Propagation is evidently fit to be as it is, from Seed to Plant, &c. to this the Gardiner, Farmer, and Colonizer of uncultivated Countries, will readily bear Witness. Besides, it is worth observing, that as to the manner in which both *Vegetable* and *Animal* Bodies are *now* formed, and brought into being; there is no *new Matter* hereby introduced into the Creation; but only a continual Rotation, and Transition of old Matter into new Shapes and Forms. But,—without the present Manner of Propagation, either the several Kinds of Vegetables and Animals must soon be extinct, and sink into nothing; or else they must be, from Time to Time, recruited by *fresh Acts of Creation*. But that would be highly unadvisable, for several Reasons. For first, such frequent Acts of Creation, would annihilate the
very

very Effence of that which we commonly call *a Miracle*; or divine Interposition, by *controlling* or *suspending* the stated Laws of Nature. And of course, the Creator would thereby, needlessly, preclude himself from one Half of the Means he now has, of setting the Seal of Heaven to any Revelation of his Will to Mankind: *Miracle* and *Prophecy* being the only conceivable Means he has, of doing this. In the next Place, such a Supply of Nature, by fresh Acts of Creation, would be a great Impeachment of God's Wisdom; for then, the present wise System of Things, instead of resembling a fine *Automaton*, or well constructed Machine, that moves of itself; would rather be like such a bungling Performance, as should make it necessary for the Maker of it, continually to stand behind, and keep it in Motion with his Finger. And lastly; all Addition of new Matter, by fresh Acts of Creation, must, sooner or later, and more or less, introduce (as all *Astronomers* will attest) such a Confusion, and continual Variation, both in the Diurnal and Annual Revolution of any Planetary Body,

as

as must soon bereave its Inhabitants, of any tolerable Exactness in the computing of Times and Seasons: The Inconveniences of which, would be more numerous than need, or *can* well, be here recited.* And were we to suppose the Succession to be kept up by a new Creation of *Seeds* only, which should make such a trivial Addition to the Matter and Weight of the Globe, as might pass for *Insensible*, or *Physically* nothing at all; —
 why

* 'Twill be sufficient to observe, that were any Planetary Body to be continually increased by a new Accession of Matter, the *Centrifugal* Force would then be diminished, and the *Centripetal* be increased in Proportion. The inevitable Consequence of this, *must* be, that the Planet could no longer keep one constant Tract in the Heavens, as all Planets now do, but its Orbit would be drawn into a *Spiral Line* round the Sun: 'Till in Process of Time (and a short Time too) it would be wholly absorbed in the Body of the Sun, and so destroyed. Nay, without a fresh Interposition of Providence, to add to the Projectility of all the other Planets, — such new Accession of Matter to the Sun, would, by an Increase of its Attraction, make such an Addition to each of their *Centripetal* Forces, as must, in Time, draw *them* down too, in *Spiral Lines*, to the Sun, and so destroy them all. So hard it is to make the *least* Alteration for the better, in any of God's *Physical* as well as *Providential* Dispensations.

why then, 'tis plain, we should be just where we are at present, as to the Necessity of a *gradual Progress*, or *Increase*; because — those Seeds must grow. So much wiser is the Method already taken, that every Thing that grows, should have (*Gen. i. 11.*) its “ own Seed within its self.”

And as the present gradual Way is so necessary to the more convenient Propagation, both of *Vegetable* and *Animal* Bodies; so is it as necessary to the right Cultivation of the Minds of the *Rational* Inhabitants of the Earth. For besides the many noble Virtues, and reasonable Duties, that flow from *Affinity* and *Consanguinity*, all of which are productive of some of the most material Branches of Rational Happiness; the present manner of Production, does also naturally give Rise to that Spirit of *Imitation*, so necessary to all *Art* and *Science*. For the Case is this. An Infant comes into the World, absolutely *helpless*, *weak*, and *naked*: But very soon feels the Advantages of being taken Care of, by those of superior

§ 10.
— And the
Cultivation
of the Mind.

Prejudice of
Education
considered.

superior Wisdom, Strength, and Abilities, who are usually its *Parents*: And of course, it soon comes to love, admire, and esteem those Qualities in them. This, in Conjunction with the natural and necessary Force of Habits, generates by Degrees, that which is commonly called, — *Prejudice of Education*. A Word, of bad Sound, indeed, when it serves only to *propagate* and *perpetuate* old Errors and Absurdities; which is very often the Case, since few Men have either the Leisure, Inclination, or Abilities, both to think at *large*, and to examin every thing to the *Bottom*. But still, Prejudice of Education is, in itself, so far from being an Evil *upon the whole*, that it is the great Cultivater and Improver of every Mental Endowment, as well as many of the Corporal Gratifications that we enjoy. Every Art and Science takes its rise from it. Without it, we should take no more Delight in *learning* any thing, than Brute Animals do. For were we not thus naturally swayed by Example, and formed for Imitation, none of the noble Sciences, none of the useful Arts of Life, that distinguish *Civilization*

zation from *Barbarism*, could be transmitted down to Posterity, by Education. But in the Course of two Generations, the human Race would be all *Barbarized* like *American* Savages, or rather like the Beasts of the Field. Such is, upon the whole, the happy result, you see, of our being produced by the gradual Process we are, from *Embrio* to Infancy, Youth, &c. For the Evils which Prejudice of Education is, accidentally as it were, productive of, are, like all other Evils that God permits to enter into the System of the Universe, nothing more than such as are unavoidably connected with much greater Good; and consequently, are, upon the whole, very fit to be endured without Murmur or Complaint. So hard it is, to make any Amendment, in the Works of that great Artificer, whose Wisdom, Goodness, and Power are infinite.

And thus, a gradual Progress towards Perfection, in all the Works of God, or, in other Words, the usually making *one* State previously *necessary* to the Introduction of *another*, of a more compleat and perfect

§ II.
The Whole
applied to
this *Rational*
ale.

perfect Kind, has been fully *exemplified* and *defended*. The Consequence resulting from the whole, in Regard to the Point in Hand, is this: "That 'tis something
 " more than probable, that this present
 " State of Trial, of which the Sin of *Adam*
 " was introductory, is foreseen by the Crea-
 " tor to be necessary for us, in order to sea-
 " son our Minds with such an experimental
 " Sense of Good and Evil, as will be requi-
 " site to qualify us, both to *enjoy* and *hold fast*,
 " that blissful State, for which we are ulti-
 " mately intended." For, as our Creator has made us *active* Beings, he must of course supply us with fit Matter hereafter, for *that Activity* to *work* on. 'Tis true, that of what Nature that Matter will be, we know not; and perhaps the Reason why we know it not, may be, because it is, at present, as much out of the Reach of Human Conception, as the Occupations of a *Man*, are beyond the Conception of a *Brute*. It seems, however, a fair and rational Conclusion, that the State we now are in, is necessary, in the Nature of things, to fit us for a *higher* and a *nobler* State, that is to follow *hereafter*; Or else,
 here

here is, contrary to all Reason, Sense, and the Analogy both of Nature and Providence, an abrupt and sudden Deviation from the usual Operations of infinite Wisdom, which is a thing that seems hardly to be supposed.

The practical Conclusions that result from this whole Train of Reasoning, from first to last, are of the highest Use and Importance. They may be variously branched out, and expressed in different Words, but still, they will be found to center, pretty generally, in this *one* Point. “ That
 “ the greatest Act of Wisdom, any rea-
 “ sonable Man can exert, is, to put the
 “ firmest Trust and Confidence, in God’s
 “ *Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, and Power,*
 “ in regard to all he *says*, and all he *does* ;
 “ and all that he *permits* to be done.” I
 hope enough has been here said, so far
 to open the Minds and Hearts of even
 the most prejudiced of my Readers, as to
 make them confess, that *something*, at least,
 has been here advanced, that mollifies in
some Degree, the old Charge against Re-
 velation, “ that it implies Weakness and

§ 12.
 Practical
 Conclusions.
 — 1st, as to
 Faith.

D d

“ Injustice

§ 12

“ Injustice in the Deity, to have permitted the *Fall of Man*, and the evil Consequences of Original Sin.” And since every old Objection answered, is tantamount to a new positive Argument in Defence of Revelation, — surely — when we reflect on the many Difficulties cleared up, and the many Objections obviated, in the various Ages of the Church, it ought in all Reason, to make us the more readily and chearfully give Credit, to the divine Attributes, for such *other* Points of Difficulty, as may still occur in the System of Christian Revelation. For when infinite *Wisdom, Knowledge, and Perfection*, condescends, for our Information and Improvement, to hold an Intercourse with absolute *Weakness, Ignorance, and Imperfection*; (which is the very Case of God’s revealing his Mind to us in Scripture) what Wonder, I say, is it, if in the Thread of the Discourse, something should here and there be let fall, that may puzzle the Understanding of *some* of the *many Persons*, to whom that Discourse is addressed? But, pray, would it not be a far greater Wonder, if the Case were otherwise?

wife? When new Light discovers new Objects, to those Eyes that hardly ever saw Light before, can it be thought strange, that many of those Objects should appear wonderful and unaccountable? Or, should we not rather conclude, that if the Man saw nothing that was *wonderful* and *strange to him*, 'twas rather to be suspected, that the Light had not yet got through the Film, and that his Eyes were badly couched? Therefore, in all the parallel Cases of Scripture Difficulties, when once we are fully convinced by Reason, that Scripture *really is* divine Revelation, or the Word of God; and that we have attained to the true Sense and Purport of it; we are then, no doubt, to comprehend as much of it as we can; but, we must also be content to give it Credit, where we understand it not. To any honest, thinking Man, of any tolerable Degree of natural Sagacity, and some Share of Learning, both the *internal* and *external* Proofs and Evidences of the divine Authority of the Christian Faith, are so MANY, and so glaringly *strong* and *clear*; that I, for my own Part, am fully persuaded,

ed, that when those Ages shall come, (and we are *well* assured that come they *will*) in which *Christianity* shall be fully established over the Face of the whole Earth; it will go near to shock the Faith of many an one, who shall not be well versed, in what will *then* be ancient History, — to be told, that there ever was such a Character, as that of a modern *Deist* or *Infidel*, to have been found upon Earth,

§ 13.
— 2dly, to
Submission to
God's Will.

Nor is a ready Faith in what God *says*, a more reasonable Duty, than a ready and cheerful Submission and Resignation, to what he either *does*, or *suffers* to be done. For as he can neither *deceive* nor *be deceived*, so neither can he be cruel or unjust to any of his Creatures. And therefore, be our Station in this Life what it will, high or low, rich or poor; 'tis certainly both our *Duty* and our *Interest*, to be patient and contented under it. For we are in the Hands of one, before whom all Nature lies in View, and who easily darts his Eye, into all future Events of every Kind. He certainly best knows, both what *we* are fit for, and what

what is fit for *us*; and no doubt, but that he disposes of us accordingly. For as he saw that it was fit and necessary for *us*, and *all Mankind in general*, to go thro' a previous State of Probation, here upon Earth; 'tis in the highest Degree probable, that he has taken care to adapt the Nature and Kind of every Man's particular Probation, to the best Benefit and Advantage of each Individual: And, perhaps, with a particular View, to what is to become each Man's especial *Province* or *Employment* in a future State. And if we have but the Wisdom to submit, to rest contented, and to convert our present Fate and Allotment to its proper Use, — we know, that in this Case, *all Things shall work together for good, to them that thus love God*. No doubt, but that as God has made us *Active* Beings, and therefore given us an Abhorrence of Pain and Misery; 'tis fit we should do all we honestly can, to remove such Evils as may annoy us; and to acquire every kind of *Good*, that we can innocently wish for. But then, in doing so, we must take care to follow both Parts of the good old Rule,

Rule, of "being as active and diligent,
 " as if *we* did *all*, and Providence did
 " *nothing* : And as resigned, in respect
 " to the Event, as if Providence did
 " *every* thing, and we ourselves did *no-*
 " *thing*." Whenever we place such a
 Trust as this, in our Creator, we do, to
 all Intents and Purposes, reap the Bene-
 fits and Advantages of every one of God's
 Attributes, for then, they will *all of them*,
 be employed in doing Good *to us*.

§ 14.
 — 3d, to the
 Greatness of
 future Hap-
 piness. or
 Misery.

How great that Good will be, upon
 the Whole, may, I think, be estimated
 in some Measure, by that PRODIGIOUS
 TRAIN OF WISDOM, which, to any
 thinking Man, is so visible in the whole
 Construction of the *Christian* Dispensation,
 from first to last. And all this for what?
 Why to incline *us* to make a wise and
 proper Use of the Freedom of our Will,
 and of that State of Probation, which
 God has *here* placed us in. If therefore
 the Greatness and Importance of the *End*,
 may be measured by the Nobleness of
 the *Means*, surely the Happiness we are
 capable of attaining, must be most incon-
 ceivably

ceivably great, and the Miseries we shall thereby avoid, be great in the same Proportion too. The Joys of Heaven are the Fruits of that sacred Tree of Life, of which the Law of *Moses* is the *Root*, Christianity the *Tree*, and good Works, or a holy Life, the *Blossoms*. If, therefore, so much Wisdom, Power and Goodness, have been expended upon the *Root* and *Branches*, what a much more amazing Display of the same Goodness, Wisdom and Power, may we expect to find in the *Heavenly Fruit* hereafter; when we shall be blessed with the Beatific Vision of God, and see *him* as he is.

Here, therefore, are tendered to us, on one Hand, the endless Joys of a most happy Eternity; and on the other, eternal Misery, from which nothing *will* or *can* deliver us. Between both, stands that HEAVENLY LAMP, the Word of God: Kindly and mercifully held forth to us, to shew us those Duties that alone can lead us to Heaven, and apprize us of those Snares of Sin, that must unavoidably sink us, into the very Depth of eternal

§ 15.
Obedience to
God, the
Whole of
Man.

nal Misery. Our Wills are free; and we are at Liberty to choose that which *we* like best: For *there is this Day* fairly set before us, as *Moses* expresses it, *both a Blessing and a Curse*. If we incline to the *Broad Road* that leads to Destruction; no doubt but that the *Devil* will make the Journey as pleasant to us, for a Year or two, as we can wish: But if we wisely take the narrower Path, that leads to LIFE; God will so assist us with his Grace, that the Passage, in a short Time, will grow much pleasanter to us, than that of the *Broad Road*; and will soon give us no contemptible a Foretaste of what we hope to enjoy hereafter.

Therefore,

§ 16.
General Con-
clusion.

“ Let us hear the Conclusion of the
“ whole Matter.”

28 JY 58

“ FEAR GOD, AND KEEP HIS COM-
“ MANDMENTS; FOR THIS IS THE
“ WHOLE OF MAN.” *Eccles. xii. 13.*

F I N I S.

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